

Jordan Times

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50 Kurds killed in Turkish operation

ANKARA (AP) — Turkish jetfighters and helicopters have been bombing legendary Mount Ararat to wipe out Kurdish guerrilla bases, reported killed. The offensive has been going on for three days, Anatolia looking for the remains of Biblical Noah's Ark. Ananila said some 400 Turkish Kurdish rebels of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) were believed to have taken refuge in the mountain in eastern Turkey and in surrounding terrain near Armenia and Iran. The PKK has been searching for safe bases in the country since the army forced them out of their camps in northern Iraq near the border in a month-long military operation last fall. Over 1,000 PKK members had died in the latest operation although the exact casualty count was not known. The Turkish military operation came a week before the traditional Kurdish spring celebrations. Dozens of Kurds were killed in the southeastern region last year when the celebrations turned into a violent uprising for self-rule.

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Gunmen kill PLO officer in Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (R) — A Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officer was killed and one was wounded in an overnight ambush near a South Lebanon refugee camp, security sources said Saturday. They said gunmen fired at Major Abu Dargham and Captain Abu Hussein Farhoud of the Fatah movement at 'Ain Al Hilweh camp near Sidon, 40 kilometers south of Beirut. Maj. Abu Dargham was killed and Capt. Farhoud seriously wounded. No group claimed responsibility for the attack, but the sources linked it to a bloody feud between Fatah, led by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, and Abu Nidal's Fatah Revolutionary Council (FRC). Five guerrillas have been killed this year in the inter-Palestinian feud. More than 25, including Fatah and FRC commanders, were killed in 1992.

Morocco: Sahara plebiscite in October

RABAT (R) — A referendum for Saharans to decide whether Western Sahara should become independent or integrate with Morocco could take place by the end of October, Moroccan Private television said Friday. The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved a resolution earlier this week setting the end of 1993 as the deadline for the vote. (Moroccan Foreign Minister) Abdul Latif Filali announced that the referendum could take place by the end of October and invites U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to visit Morocco (before then). 2M international television said, the referendum has been repeatedly delayed because of differences over who would be eligible to vote.

Kabul releases 2 CIS prisoners

KABUL (R) — Afghanistan freed two of the last Soviet-era prisoners of war Saturday and a Russian diplomat said the move marked a first step to improved ties between Kabul's Islamic rulers and Moscow. "This is a great gift not only to the mothers of these prisoners but to all mothers in Russia," said Achikmat Chekunov, Russia's deputy consul general in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif. The men, Leonid Volkov, 29, from Moldova, and Viktor Nazarbayev, 27, from Ukraine, were taken prisoner while Soviet forces occupied the country. They have been inherited by the forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) — nominally a joint body but still effectively under Russian control. Their release is the second since the Mujahedeen took power from the former Soviet-installed government last April. One prisoner was freed last May. The two soldiers, bearded and dressed in jeans and military-style jackets, were flown to Kabul from northern Kunduz province.

Big powers in joint Gulf exercise

BAHRAIN (AP) — U.S., Russian, British and French warships have completed a joint exercise in the Gulf that included the first-ever American simulated refueling of a Russian ship, the U.S. Navy said Saturday. According to a statement issued by the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command aboard the flagship USS Lasalle, the exercise was "designed to sharpen the four navies' ability to work together in support of peace in the region."

Palestinian groups call strike

DAMASCUS (R) — An alliance of 10 hardline Palestinian groups called Saturday on Palestinians inside and outside the Israeli-occupied territories to strike on March 9 to express rejection of the Arab-Israeli peace talks. They also called for a strike on March 17 to mark the end of the third month since Israel expelled 415 Palestinians on December 17. "We call upon our people inside and outside (the occupied territories) to stage a general strike on Tuesday March 9 to mark the 4th month of the intifada against Israeli rule," the statement said. "We also call for a general strike on Wednesday March 17 to mark three months of the expulsion," it added.

FBI holds 3 more in New York blast, finds explosives in locker

Combined agency dispatches

SECURITY MEN hunting the World Trade Centre bombers say they have arrested three more men and seized explosive materials that may be linked to the blast.

The three were arrested Friday outside a mosque in Brooklyn as authorities turned their attention to people with ties to Mohammed Salameh, 26, the only person charged in connection with the bombing so far.

Five people were killed and more than 1,000 injured in the Feb. 26 blast, which crippled the giant business complex.

Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) say they expect more arrests.

Colleagues of a suspect arrested in the bombing may have fled to the Middle East, leaving the suspect "holding the bag," a federal investigator said.

The FBI was investigating whether the three people, arrested Friday for driving a stolen car to a New York mosque, were linked to the blast, and a judge said another man charged with striking FBI agents searching his apartment "may be involved up to his eyeballs."

Federal authorities searching a warehouse in Jersey City, New Jersey, Friday seized bomb parts and more than 45 kilograms of explosives, indicating other

bombings might have been planned, said the federal official, who has played a prominent role in the investigation. He spoke to the Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The Jersey Journal, citing a government source at the warehouse who spoke on condition of anonymity, reported that the storage space had been rented by Salameh.

Salameh remained jailed without bail in charges of aiding and abetting the bombing. The FBI said Thursday it found bomb-making materials in an apartment linked to him.

The motive for the blast remained a mystery.

The blast crippled the world's second tallest building complex and crippled parts of the Wall Street financial district. A trade centre employee remains missing.

The man charged with obstruction of justice for allegedly striking agents after they came to search his apartment, Ibrahim Al Gabrowny, plunged his hands into a urine-filled toilet to foil any testing for traces of explosives, a prosecutor said at his arraignment.

Assistant U.S. attorney Henry Depippo said Gabrowny was a part of the investigation into the bombing, but he did not say Gabrowny was a suspect. Salameh used Gabrowny's address in New York's Brooklyn

borough to get a driver's license, the attorney said.

Gabrowny is a cousin of Al Sayyid Nosair, who was convicted of a weapons charge in the 1991 assassination of radical Rabbi Meir Kahane in New York City.

In other developments, the Egyptian cleric who preached at a New Jersey mosque where Salameh and Nosair worshiped issued an unequivocal denunciation of the bombing.

Islam is opposed to the destruction of life and property of the innocent. The bombing of the World Trade Centre could not have been by a true Muslim, said his statement Friday.

Salameh worshiped at the Jersey City mosque where militant Muslim fundamentalist Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman preached, officials have said. The blind cleric, who was acquitted of charges in the 1981 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, has been living in self-imposed exile in the United States.

Investigators resumed combing the rubble for the first time in two days after 18 steel braces were put in place to shore up the underground garage where the bomb blew up, creating a crater five stories deep. The twin 110-storey towers are expected to remain closed for a month.

On Friday afternoon, the FBI arrested three people outside a

Brooklyn mosque after they stole a car from Logan airport in Boston and drove south, said James Fox, the agency's New York chief.

"We don't have sufficient evidence at this point to say it is connected with the bombing," Mr. Fox said on the McNeil Lehrer newshour television show.

At Gabrowny's arraignment, Mr. Depippo said agents found a pistol, a permit for the pistol, 150 bullets and two stun guns in the man's apartment.

They also found five fake Nicaraguan passports, one each for Nosair, his wife and his three children, and they found five corresponding Nicaraguan birth certificates.

Gabrowny's lawyer, Michael Warro, asked U.S. District Judge Richard Owen to set bail at \$10,000 arguing that nothing in the complaint warranted jail without bail.

But Mr. Owen denied bail, saying Gabrowny could "disappear into the sands of somewhere," and "he may be involved up to his eyeballs" in the blast.

Salameh, 25, a resident of Jersey City, was arrested there Thursday after authorities traced a piece of a van's axle found in

(Continued on page 5)
Arab-Americans expect backlash, page 2; Sheikh preached turmoil in Egyptian hometown, page 5

Arafat: Jerusalem is the core issue

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat was quoted Saturday as saying the issue of Jerusalem was more important than the crisis over Israel's expulsion of nearly 400 Palestinians.

Mr. Arafat also attacked Iran, which he said was supporting extremist forces in the region, and expressed support for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in its dispute with Iran over flyspeck islands in the Gulf.

"The case of the expellees is important, but we consider the basic issue to be that of Jerusalem," Mr. Arafat told the London-based daily Al Hayat, which also is published in Bahrain.

"It is not a matter of the expellees alone, it is a matter of the Palestinian cause as a whole," he said.

The Palestinians still have not decided whether to resume peace talks with Israel, after suspending their participation following Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion order.

Mr. Arafat recalled that the return of Arab East Jerusalem to the Palestinians was part of a peace plan suggested by Saudi Arabian King Fahd in 1981.

Mr. Arafat accused Iran of supporting extremist forces in the region, a possible reference to the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas faction with which he is struggling for domination in the occupied territories. Hamas is known to have links to Iran.

He expressed support for the United Arab Emirates in its dispute with Tehran over the islands of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunbs.

"Any threat to any Gulf Arab country is also a threat to Palestine," he said.

Iran shared Abu Musa with the United Arab Emirates until last year, when it claimed full sovereignty over the island in the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

The Tunbs were occupied by Iran two decades ago, but are also claimed by the emirates.

Jordan unlikely to attend talks without Palestinians — King

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Jordan is unlikely to attend Middle East peace talks with Israel next month unless Palestinians also take part, His Majesty King Hussein said in an interview published Friday.

In the interview, to be broadcast on Sunday's edition of John McLaughlin's One on One on NBC, King Hussein noted that Jordan and the Palestinians formally constituted a joint delegation in the talks, though they conduct the actual negotiations separately.

"I certainly hope the Palestinians will attend. I don't see how we can resolve the Palestinian problem with the Palestinians absent," he said.

"You can't go with half a delegation, if only from the point of view of form," the King added. A transcript of the interview was made available to news organisations Friday.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said last week he



would invite the parties to hold a ninth round of peace talks in Washington in April. Formal invitations have not yet gone out. The talks were suspended in December when Israel expelled 415 Palestinians from the occupied territories. The Palestinians have been demanding the return of all the evictees as a condition for rejoining the negotiations.

But Mr. Christopher made it clear he thought Israel had done enough by offering to return 101 of the exiles now and the rest by the end of this year.

Palestinians now face a tough decision on whether to return to the talks, especially since the other Arab parties — Syria, Lebanon and Jordan — all seem eager to resume.

Asked whether he thought the talks would take place in April, King Hussein said: "I hope so. I hope so."

The King, who has recently recovered from a major surgery, said he was almost back to normal physically.

"It has taken quite a bit of time to get over the results of the surgery in terms of the fatigue and so on. My endurance was not the same as it was before I fell ill," he said.

"But I have been assured that

(Continued on page 5)
Jordan wants exiles repatriated before peace talks, page 3

Brotherhood denounces World Trade Centre blast, sees Israeli involvement

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Muslim Brotherhood Saturday condemned the Feb. 26 bombing at the World Trade Centre in New York and suggested that Israeli agents could have carried out the blast with a view to distorting the international image of Islam and Muslims.

Two Brotherhood deputies, addressing a press conference mostly devoted to Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of Palestinians to South Lebanon, also assailed Washington's decision to cut contacts with the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and moves by U.S. congressmen to bar people associated with Hamas from entering the U.S.

Hamzeh Mansour and Ahmad Kofaween also lambasted Washington's caution advisory to Americans travelling to Jordan and demanded an apology.

The two deputies, who were among four Brotherhood deputies who recently visited the nearly 400 Palestinian exiles stranded in South Lebanon and attended a meeting in Beirut on the expulsions, said the Brotherhood, along with groups from several Arab and other countries, rejects any compromise solution to end the expulsion crisis.

"We demand the implementation of (U.N. Security Council) Resolution 799," which calls for the unconditional and immediate return of the expellees to the

occupied territories, Mr. Mansour told the press conference. He said the Beirut meeting, attended by activists from Lebanon, Palestine, Iran, Egypt, Yemen, Switzerland, Britain and several other countries, called on the Arab parties to withdraw from the Middle East peace talks with Israel regardless of the outcome of the expellee crisis.

Brotherhood deputies Hamam Saad and Abdul Rahim Akour also attended the gathering in the Lebanese capital.

On the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre, Mr. Mansour said:

"Islam does not condone violence and rejects any attack on civilian targets in countries with whom we are not in a state of war."

"Although we disapprove and categorically reject American policies, we strongly condemn bombings targeting innocent civilians."

He suggested that Israeli agents could have been behind the bombing, which killed five people and wounded over 1,000 people.

Mohammad Salameh, 25, identified by American officials quoted by international news agencies as a Jordanian passport holder, was arraigned Thursday by a New York court in connection with the bombing.

Salameh, said to be a follower of a hardline Egyptian cleric based in New Jersey, pleaded not guilty to charges of abetting the

bombing.

Mr. Mansour said the Brotherhood had no knowledge of the suspect, but added:

"Regardless of (Salameh's) passport or his place of birth, we believe that the hands of Zionist agents were behind the bombing."

"They now blame it on Muslims in order to undermine Islamic renaissance in the Arab World and distort the international image of Islam."

The Brotherhood deputy also castigated the American warning to travellers to Jordan as a move that undermines the democratisation of the Kingdom.

"The Jordanian people have never been and will never be extremists," he said. "We are hospitable people whose religion bars us from attacking innocent people."

"The American warning is interference in Jordan's internal affairs and undermines the democratisation process under way in the Kingdom," he said, calling on Washington to "apologise for its statement, which constitutes aggression on our stability and national security."

The warning was also ironic, he said, particularly that it came a few days after U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher visited Jordan as part of a Middle East tour and praised Jordanian-American relations.

Mr. Mansour also criticised last week's U.S. decision to terminate

(Continued on page 5)

Egypt charges dozens with attacks on tourists

CAIRO (Agencies) — The military indicted 49 suspected Muslim extremists Saturday in a series of attacks against foreign tourists. Charges ranged from joining an illegal organisation trying to overthrow the government.

"This indictment does not mean that the organisation has been destroyed," said Major General Mohammad Abdullah, who signed the indictment. "We do not know how many (members) they are."

Gen. Abdullah said some leaders were outside Egypt and were not indicted. He refused to say if one of them is Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, reported spiritual leader of a man arrested in last week's bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, 54, preaches in a mosque in New Jersey.

"There are many leaders outside the country," Gen. Abdullah said. "I cannot answer the question about Abdul Rahman right now."

Six of the 49 defendants indicted Saturday, whose ages are 20 to 25, are at large. Some could be sentenced to death if convicted by a military court that convenes Tuesday.

A stepped-up campaign of extremist violence has left 94 people dead and 164 wounded in the past 14 months. Militants targeted foreign tourists last summer. They have killed a British woman and two men, a Swede and a

Turk, and two dozen foreigners have been wounded.

In an attempt to contain the violence, President Hosni Mubarak cracked down and began referring cases against accused extremists to military courts to ensure speedy trials. Legislation he had enacted last summer penalises with death membership in a terrorist group.

Gen. Abdullah included 27 cases in the indictment, based on eight attacks on tour buses and cruises. Related charges involved carrying unauthorised weapons and explosives.

"We put them all together because the main issue is the same. Attacking tourism and Egypt's economy, as well as attempting to overthrow the government," the general told a news conference.

All this was accompanied by a media campaign (by the extremists) inside and outside the country to spread their thoughts."

Muslim militants meanwhile, warned that their next targets might be Egyptian, Arab and foreign businesses.

"The Islamic Group warns investors — Egyptian, Arab and foreign — that they should liquidate their investments in Egypt at the earliest opportunity," said Al Gama'a Al Islamiya (Islamic Group) in a statement faxed to an international news organisation in Cairo.

"The slogan 'investment but

(Continued on page 5)

Violence continues in Somalia

MOGADISHU (AP) — At least three Somalis were killed and two injured in an overnight firefight with U.S. troops, witnesses said Saturday.

The deaths Friday night, if confirmed, would be the latest casualties of the friction between Somalis and the foreign military force that came to protect donated food from looters and restore some semblance of order to the devastated Horn of Africa country.

Also Saturday, military authorities in Paris said two French soldiers were killed in a road accident between Mogadishu and Baidoa. They were the first French troops to die in the Somalia intervention.

Earlier Friday, allied soldiers shot dead five Somalis and wounded two.

At a hearing Friday, an American soldier suspected of using excessive force against Somalis last month told authorities that every Somali on the street posed a potential threat.

American military officials confirmed an exchange of fire in a neighbourhood in central Mogadishu Friday night, but said they had no information on Somali casualties.

(Continued on page 5)

U.N. plans to play tough with Somali warlords, page 2

Jordan condemns New York bombing, identifies suspect as native of Nablus

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan Saturday condemned the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York and pledged full cooperation with investigations into the crime.

A government statement also identified a suspect held in connection with the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre as a Palestinian holding a Jordanian passport who left the Kingdom in 1987.

Following is the full text of the statement:



Residents crowd around the wreckage of a boat destroyed in an Israeli helicopter attack Saturday at the 'Ain Al Hilweh' refugee camp in South Lebanon (AFP photo)

Israeli helicopters raid 'Ain Al Hilweh

SIDON (AP) — Israeli helicopters blasted Palestinian guerrillas in South Lebanon Saturday in what police said was an apparent attempt to abort a seaborne guerrilla attack. Four people were reportedly wounded.

They said the raid by four Cobra gunships targeted a rubber dinghy owned by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) in Sidon's refugee camp of Ain Al Hilweh.

Police said the Cobras fired five "small caliber rockets" that scored direct hits on the dinghy, reducing it into a pile of gutted material.

He said the dinghy had been parked near a PFLP-GC office in Aio Al Hilweh for two days. The office was not targeted by the attack.

In Israel, an army spokesman confirmed the attack and said all the helicopters returned safely to base.

Police said unmanned Israeli reconnaissance planes flew over the camp Thursday and Friday.

"The Israelis must have seen photographs of the dinghy and assumed it was being prepared for a seaborne attack on them," police spokesman said.

Shortly after the raid, a jeep fitted with a Syrian licence plate drove into the camp and towed out the dinghy's wreckage.

Angry PFLP-GC guerrillas, armed with assault rifles, prevented photographers from shooting pictures of the jeep.

The spokesman said two PFLP-GC guerrillas and two civilians, a woman and a 13-year-old boy, were wounded in the attack, which lasted for less than two

minutes.

It was Israel's first raid on Ain Al Hilweh this year. The teeming shantytown of 60,000, is near the southern provincial capital of Sidon.

The PFLP-GC is part of the opposition within the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Ahmad Jibril runs the group from headquarters in Damascus.

The raid was Israel's seventh air attack in Lebanon in 1993. The previous six raids targeted suspected strongholds of Iranian backed guerrillas elsewhere in South Lebanon, killing one person and wounding two by police count.

Earlier Saturday, Lebanon's most influential Shiite Muslim cleric called for a multi-sect armed resistance against Israel (see page 2).

Pepper (sweet)	800 / 600
Potato	600 / 400
Tomato	220 / 140

Jordan to observe women's day with various functions

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan will observe International Women's Day next week with women associations organising a number of functions to mark the occasion.

Among the main events will be the opening of a branch of the Business and Professional Women's Club (BPWC) in Zarqa by Her Majesty Queen Noor.

Club sources told the Jordan Times that the office, to open March 13, will be devoted to legal matters pertaining to women's issues.

Before the formal opening, the BPWC will hold a ceremony at the Zarqa Chamber of Commerce to honour a group of selected women employed in Jordanian factories. Certificates of merit and gifts will be distributed to at least 15 women, said the sources.

On March 9, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) will hold a seminar to discuss women's issues in Jordan; and on March 7 the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Amman is organising a seminar to discuss discrimination against women in Jordanian laws. The main speaker will be attorney Fatimah Kosad.

On the eve of International Women's Day, the U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali said: "International Women's Day is a time to celebrate what women have achieved in their struggle for equal rights, social progress and peace. It is a time to speak honestly about the continuing oppression of women in many areas of the world and in many aspects of daily life. And it is a time to speak of what must be done to advance the cause of women still further."



A group of Chechen pilgrims now in Jordan on their way to Saudi Arabia on a 3,600-kilometre walking trip from their country

Chechen pilgrims arrive on walking trip from Grosnia

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

Daghistan, Georgia, Russia and Ositin.

The pilgrims started their overland trip from Grosnia on Jan. 2, 1993, and passed through Kabardia-Balkaria and Georgia to reach Jordan through Syria.

Their route would have been shortened if they had passed through Georgia, but relations between the Chechens and Georgians are strained and therefore passage through Georgian territory was not possible, Mr. Bassadok told the Jordan Times.

The group did not have any major problems during the trip apart from dramatically changing climate conditions of the terrain they covered, he said.

According to Mr. Bassadok, Jordan and the Chechen republic enjoy "excellent relations" and he noted that a sizeable community of ethnic Chechens lives in Jordan.

The foreign minister of the new republic, Shamseddine Aladein Yusef, was born in Jordan. So was his predecessor, Shamel Pino.

During their stay in Jordan, the pilgrims will visit Islamic holy shrines and mosques and also meet with officials of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.

"The group has already had a good taste of Jordanian hospitality," said Mr. Bassadok, adding that Jordanians throughout the pilgrims' passage from Ramtha to Zarqa hosted them and offered them food and drinks.

"There was not a single instance when the group had to enter a restaurant," he said.

The Chechen republic borders

Bataineh announces administrative changes

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Aref Bataineh Saturday announced comprehensive administrative changes in the ministry and its affiliated departments.

The appointments covered senior officials and doctors now holding key positions in the health ministry itself and its various departments.

According to the announcement, pharmacist Nayef Hamarneh will become head of the Purchases Department, engineer Omar Abu Qoura will become director of General Services and Buildings, Salim Simadi will be director of Medical Education,

Abdullah Hamdan will be director of Planning, Sulaiman Jaafari will be director of Environmental Health, Saad Kharabsheh will be director of the Disease Prevention Department, Mamoun Maabreh will be director of General Public Health, Yahya Khreis will be director of Laboratories, pharmacist Maisa Sakit will be director of the Pharmacy Department, Usama Badran will be director of the Motherhood and Child Department, pharmacist Haifa Al Asali will be director of the Medical and Quality Control Department, and Tawfiq Lohani will be director of Health Insurance.

Civil service office to start filling vacancies in April

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Civil Service Commission (CSC) which is responsible for filling vacant posts in government offices will begin this year's task by April, 1993, according to an announcement Saturday by CSC Director Abdullah Ulayan.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Ulayan said the CSC plans to fill 4,790 jobs of which 2,870 will go to university graduates. The rest, he said, will be filled by community college and high school graduates.

Most of these appointments will be for positions in the ministries of Education and Health, according to an earlier announcement by the Council of Ministers.

Referring to a Cabinet decision that certain rules and principles be adopted in the appointment of government officials in the next three years, Mr. Ulayan said that in addition to certain educational requirements these rules also require that a general test be taken by the job candidates.

He added that such tests will be arranged upon recommendations of the concerned government departments.

The CSC also takes into consideration the year of graduation, specialisation and other matters, Mr. Ulayan said.

To cases where there is parity among two or more candidates, the CSC will give priority to candidates, who are sons or daughters of martyrs, or who sustain a family whose members are unemployed, or handicapped candidates who are eligible for the jobs.

The issue of government appointments has been a centre of controversy in Parliament recently. In its latest session Wednesday, the Lower House of Parliament formed a nine-member to probe civil service appointments in the last three years for possible nepotism and unfairness.

Jordan wants expellees repatriated before peace talks resume — minister

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan wants to see a solution to the Palestinian expellees' crisis and their repatriation before the resumption of the Arab-Israeli peace process due next month, Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, announced Saturday.

Dr. Abu Jaber addressing the Foreign Affairs Committee at the Upper House of Parliament, briefed the committee on the new developments on the Jordanian, pan-Arab and international scenes since the Israeli expulsion of over 400 Palestinians to southern Lebanon more than two months ago, including the outcome of U.S. Secretary of State

Warren Christopher's visit to Jordan on Feb. 20.

The committee emphasised the need for continued coordination among the Arab parties to the peace talks, with the purpose of reaching a common Arab stand to handle the issue in a comprehensive manner.

It also stressed the need for the negotiations to pursue a path that would lead to a genuine peace based on the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and in compliance with the requirements of international legitimacy which would ensure the Palestinian people their rights.

The committee members voiced their demand that the U.N. Security Council shoulder its responsibilities with regard to enforcing the implementation of council resolutions in order to give impetus to the peace process.

In an address to the Lower House of Parliament last month Dr. Abu Jaber said that His Majesty King Hussein had pointed out in his talks with Secretary Christopher that the question of the Palestinian expellees was a major obstacle to the peace process.



Kamel Abu Jaber

Islamists take 4 of 10 bar association seats

By Mariam M. Shaban
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Six centrist and four Islamist were voted in as members of the executive committee of the Jordanian Bar Association (JBA) in Friday's elections, a spokesman for the association announced Saturday morning.

In what marks a radical change in the character of its elite organisation, the bar association took members of the Muslim Brotherhood into the ranks of its executive committee for the first time in its 42-year history.

Heavy lobbying by Islamists, and factionalism among centrists and pan-Arab groups, who traditionally dominated the jurists organisation, made a majority victory impossible for any candidate during the first round of voting Friday.

A second round was called for after the first at 17:30 on Friday afternoon.

Five of the eight candidates for

the position of president of the committee withdrew after the first round gave only 280 votes out of 1,500 cast to any single candidate.

According to the JBA's by-laws, for a candidate to win in the first round he/she must receive 50 per cent of the votes plus one vote.

In the ensuing round only 1,282 JBA members voted. Although all three candidates were centrist, the votes were almost evenly split; 441, 432 and 409, with Kamal Nasser Bahram the declared winner.

While the Islamists did not challenge the more secular centrist and pan-Arab candidates for the seat of JBA president, they did have a list of ten candidates for the ten available seats on the association's executive committee.

Previously, the Islamists had lobbied with the association's members to have one ticket which would group the left, centre and the Islamists, with the

Progress and Justice Party explains objectives, seeks to entice ex-members

By Sausan Ghosheh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In its first press conference under the new leadership of Ali Al Saad, the Progress and Justice Party (PJP) Saturday reviewed the outcome of its first convention held on Feb. 19, sought to explain the party's objectives and programmes and responded to questions regarding its two mass resignations.

Prior to their convention, the party existed as a preparatory committee, with Zaid Hamzeh as president and Ali Al Saad as vice-president. At this convention, the three-year-old party, held its first elections placing Mr. Saad in the president's seat and 50 members on a central committee, that in turn elected an 18-member executive bureau.

According to Mr. Saad, the PJP's ideology originates from Jordanian heritage and culture, and its methodology is based on realism and pragmatism. He

asserted that his party abides by the Jordanian Constitution and the National Charter.

The goals of the party, he stated, are to strengthen the roots of democracy and freedom in the Jordanian society, explaining that "freedom is the essence of progress and justice."

The party also aims to form an Arab union, perceiving Jordan as a part of the Arab World, sharing in its hopes and pains, Mr. Saad said.

The unity between Palestinians and Jordanians, according to the PJP president, can never be severed. He added that the PJP sees the Palestinian problem as being at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that the peace process is the appropriate method of solving the issue, as long as the negotiators adhere to the United Nations resolutions.

Economically, the PJP supports a free market and encourages open trade with other countries.

Following the results of the

Former German envoy visits Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Former German ambassador to Jordan Herwig Bartels held talks with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday to review ways of further promoting German-Jordanian cooperation in trade and other fields, according to a source at the German embassy here.

The source told the Jordan Times that in the two-hour meeting the Prince and Dr. Bartels also exchanged views on the Middle East peace process and how to give momentum to this process in order to reach the aspired goal.

Also, according to the source, Dr. Bartels, who is accompanied by a 3-member official delegation, plans to hold talks Sunday with Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour and Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz to explore increased cooperation in trade and technical fields. Financial issues will also be discussed at the meetings, the source added.

Dr. Bartels, who is the director of the Middle East desk at the German Foreign Ministry, Saturday met with acting Minister of Tourism Abdul Karim Al Kabariti to discuss means of increasing

Ras Al 'Ain murder suspects arrested, said to confess

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An extra-marital affair involving the wife was apparently behind the killing of an army officer whose body was found dumped in an Amman suburb last week, police sources said Saturday.

The 17-year-old wife of Ayman Abadi, 25, who was a first lieutenant in the Armed Forces, and a 21-year-old youth described as her lover were behind the murder of Abadi, who was strangled to death after he was given drugged food, the sources said, quoting a confession by the wife.

The names of the suspects were withheld in line with usual police inquiry and criminal trial procedures.

The woman and her alleged accomplice have been referred to the prosecutor-general's office, the sources said.

The body of Abadi was discovered near the cigarette factory in Ras Al 'Ain, about two kilometres from his residence, Monday. His hands and feet were tied and the body was wrapped in a bag.

The state of the body was very similar to another body which

Civil status office to open in Rweished

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Status and Passport Department will soon open a civil status registration office in Rweished near the eastern borders to serve the town and several villages and population settlements nearby.

Head of the department's Public Relations Office Muhiiddin Kilani Saturday announced that in March the department opened two civil status registration offices

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

- King receives congratulatory cable from Lebanon**
AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday received a cable from Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Al Hariri congratulating him on the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan. Mr. Hariri wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness and the Jordanian people further progress and prosperity.
- Prince Mohammad condole Khaled Al Karaki**
AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Saturday visited Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki to condole him over the death of his brother Colonel Suleiman Al Karaki. The deceased was killed in an accident last week.
- Kabariti appointed acting Tourism Minister**
AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Saturday appointing Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti as acting Minister of Tourism and Antiquities while Minister Yanal Hikmat is still abroad.
- House approves temporary law for handicapped**
AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper of Parliament Education Committee Saturday approved the 1989 Temporary Law No. 34 on the Welfare of the Handicapped. The House introduced minor amendments to the temporary law.
- Antiquities office collects 3 times more last year**
AMMAN (Petra) — The Antiquities Department has collected JD150,650 in fees from Jordanian, Arab and foreign tourists who visited archaeological sites in Jordan in 1992. Department Director General Safwan Tell said the amount equals three times the department's revenues in 1991.

Father and 5 children drown in Emirates

ABU DHABI (R) — A Jordanian schoolteacher and five of his children drowned when one child jumped into a canal and the others tried one after another to rescue him. Newspapers reported on Saturday.

The family — father, mother and six children aged three to 18 — were picnicking on Friday beside the canal when one of the younger children apparently went for a swim, the newspapers said.

The child got into difficulties and the father jumped in to help. When he too got into difficulties, the children, boys and girls, dived in one after the other but all drowned.

The horrified mother, who remained on the beach with the youngest child, was taken to hospital suffering from a nervous breakdown, newspaper said.

According to an obituary in Jordanian Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday, the father's name was given as Ibrahim Jabri Al Sayed. His children were identified as Iqbal, Ijial, Inal, Jabri and Jama-luddin.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of paintings by four Arab artists from the United States — Ghada Jamal, Helen Khal, Suha Nour and Afaf Zarayk — at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery in Jabal Amman, between the First and Second Circles (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

★ Islamic book exhibition at the Islamic Centre in Zarqa.

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Islam deplores murder of people

REGARDLESS OF whether or not Muslim militants were behind the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York, the central issue that remains is where Islam truly stands on such acts of violence. In the wake of the arrest of Mohammad Salameh, an alleged follower of Egyptian Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, as a suspect in the bombing, and the ensuing remarks of Sheikh Abdul Rahman that "the bombing could not have been done by a true Muslim," the international community has a right to know how Islam views attacks on civilian targets and the killing of innocent people.

There were several incidents in the Middle East region as well as in other parts of the world where Muslim fundamentalists were accused of perpetrating attacks on men and women in a manner that is clearly repugnant to Islam. The silence of the Muslim World in the face of repeated accusations, often resulting from fundamentalists' attacks on non-military targets, helped perpetuate a false impression about Islam itself.

In fact Islam has one of the most advanced rules on humanitarian law if not the most progressive one that humanity has ever conceived. The Islamic code on the conduct of warfare, for example, goes beyond the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the two protocols that were added to it in 1977. Not only are children, women and old people are protected in time of war. Even trees, water springs, buildings and animals are accorded the same degree of protection. This had been prescribed by the Prophet Mohammad's companion, the second Caliph, Omar Ben Al Khattab when he addressed his armies heading north for the conquest of Syria. Such is the high standards of Islam on the conduct of an armed struggle that the international community does not know or appreciate.

The problem lies in the fact that Muslim leaders opt always to maintain their silence whenever an Islamic faction or another conducts its struggle in a manner that is anathema to Islam. This gave rise to speculations about where true Muslims stand whenever a certain Muslim group or another takes credit for an attack on a child, woman or man.

In the attack in New York City last week, there is no question about where true Islam stands on such barbaric action. It behooves the entire Islamic world to rise up in protest to the New York bombing no matter who is ultimately charged with placing the bombs. Till this point in time, there is not enough evidence to incriminate Muslim radicals in the bombing. Many other political groups could also be suspects. Muslim leaders should speak up loud and clear whenever Muslim extremists are implicated in acts that violate the basic principles of Islam.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

HONOURING the great Muslim leader Saladin reflects Jordan's respect for the forefathers of the Islamic Nation and its heroes, said Al Ra'i daily Saturday. History abounds with great men who carried out great feats for their nation and for upholding the principles of the Islamic faith, said the daily. Saladin's name was connected with this part of the world and Jordan in particular, because this land served as the main battleground between Saladin's armies and those of the Crusaders who invaded the Holy Land, the paper said. By observing the anniversary of the death of this great leader, said Al Ra'i, Jordan is manifesting its adherence to the principles and goals he had held and worked for liberating the Arab land from the invaders. Invaders of this part of the world, according to history books, were numerous but none of them remained because they were driven out by the will of the Arab Nation, the paper added. Saladin has served as a model leader of faith and of troops which waged war on the invaders and one who based his campaigns on the true faith genuine adherence to Islam, the paper said. Saladin was the model Islamic leader who dedicated all his efforts to rid the Arab and Islamic world of the foreign domination and of forces like those which launched aggression on Iraq and continue to impose starvation on its people, the paper said.

Saleh Al Qallab, columnist in Al Dustour, Saturday voiced his apprehension about the decision to delay indefinitely for a meeting for the foreign ministers of Arab countries involved in the peace process with Israel. Saying that the Arab foreign ministers had earlier intended to hold their parley before U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region, the writer said that it would be more useful to delay the meeting after Mr. Christopher had ended his tour. But the U.S. secretary of state has long been gone, and the meeting has again been postponed until after the end of the month of Ramadan, the writer said. He said that the delay and the postponement could last for ever, giving rise to differences among the Arab parties, some of which could be tempted by the Americans to clinch separate deals with the Israelis. If the delay is to allow for more time for consultations among the Arab parties, this is a welcome development. But the Arab parties should realise that Israel will not rest without trying to disrupt the united stand of the Arab parties like it did in the wake of the 1948 and 1973 wars, causing splits among their ranks, something which helped the Jewish state to achieve its goals, warned the writer. He said he was prompted to express fear about the situation in the light of reports about behind-the-scenes contacts which aim at the conclusion of a separate deal between an Arab party and Israel and at the expenses of the other parties.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

Excellent results squeezed from crises

JORDAN DID a soper job in dealing with the numerous crises that bit the country since 1988. Jordao was not only able to survive and overcome these crises, but also to turn them around into advantages.

It is said that the word "crisis" in Chinese is a combination of two syllables of which the first means difficulty and the second means opportunity. Thus, crisis, in the perception of Chinese wisdom, is a difficult situation coupled with an opportunity for an ideal solution. Of course, letting the opportunity slip, and leaving the crisis to run its own course would transfer the crisis into a disaster, or to a hopeless case.

Fortunately, this fact was understood early in time by the Jordanian leadership. It is not a coincidence that all major crises, which struck Jordan during the last four years, did not cause the anticipated collapse. On the contrary these crises turned out to be opportunities to make gains.

The Gulf crisis for example, which erupted in 1990, could have broken the back of the Jordanian treasury, which was until then dependent on Gulf states' financial aid that vanished overnight. The end result was that the Jordanian treasury received more financial aid than was lost due to the crisis. The treasury is now much closer to self-sufficiency than it ever had been.

The massive return of tens of thousands of Jordanian expatriates and their families from Kuwait was thought to cause the Jordanian ship to sink under the impact of heavy burdens. Jordan however, was not only able to absorb the returnees smoothly, but the Jordanian economy received a push forward.

The expatriates' funds and expertise, which were previously employed in Kuwait, came back to work hard for Jordan. And thanks to the proper management of the crisis by the Jordanian

side, the huge loss to Kuwait resulting from its inhuman action in expelling Jordanians and Palestinians became the gain of Jordan.

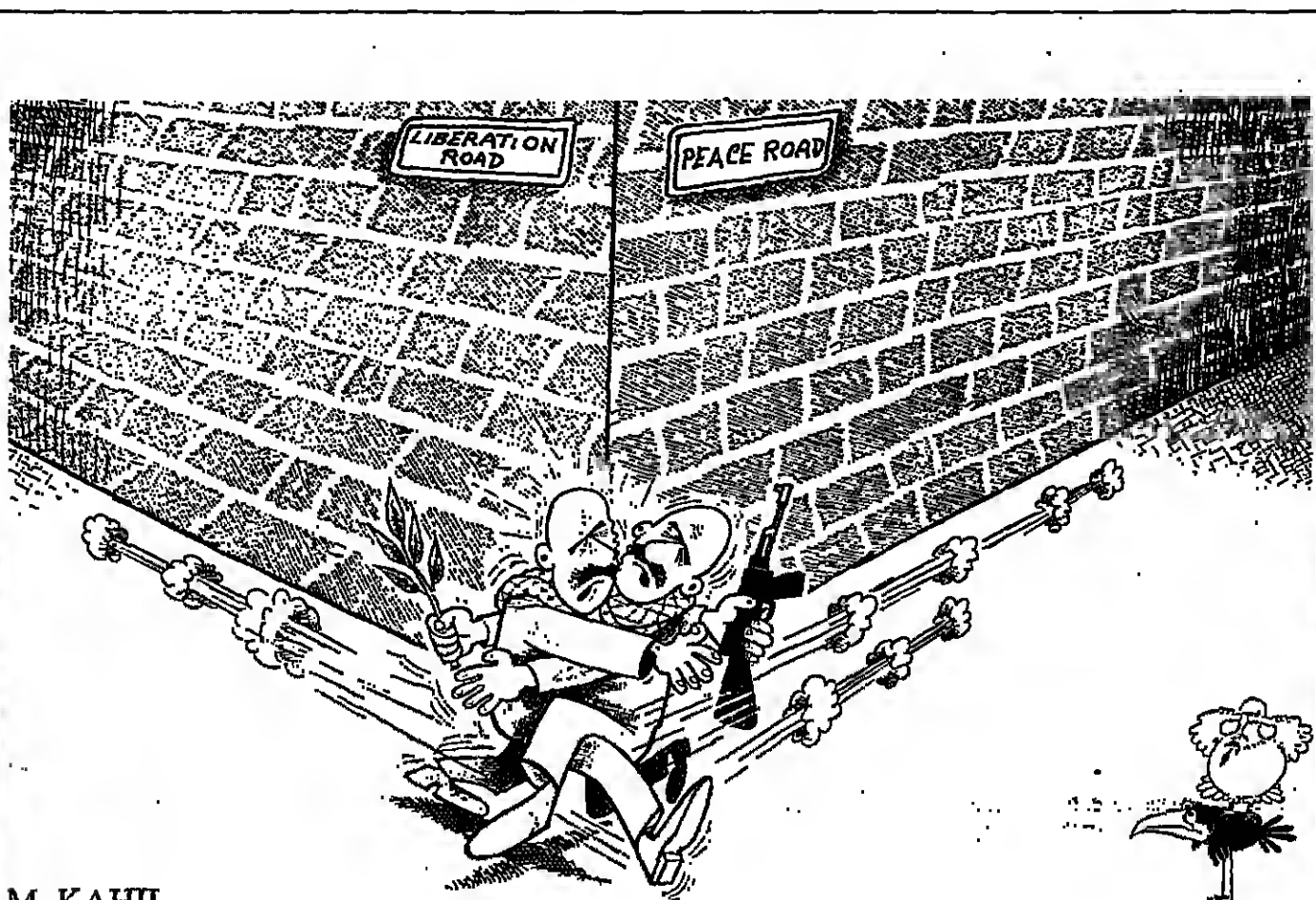
The foreign indebtedness crisis, which broke in 1988, could have permanently crippled the Jordanian economy and transformed Jordan into a chaotic place with starving people, as happened in most other developing countries which were hit by similar crisis. Yet our case, the crisis was a valuable opportunity to adjust the distorted economy and put it on the right path in accordance with a comprehensive economic adjustment programme. The programme entailed sacrifices which were duly accepted by the population, and it achieved excellent results which were the envy of the world and a source of respect by impressed observers and international institutions.

The social uprising and the violence that accompanied it in April 1989 could have transformed Jordan to another Lebanon or led to political anarchy. Instead, it gave rise to a democratisation process — led by a far-sighted leader which made Jordan stand out as the most democratic and free society in the Arab World.

Israel can no longer claim that it is the only democracy in the Middle East. In fact, it is no democracy at all, except for one class of privileged citizens. The apartheid system, the continued occupation of Arab land, the violations of human rights, the expulsion policy and defiance to international law do not indicate a democracy.

Many crises fell on Jordan which were not of its making nor its seeking, but they were turned into opportunities for progress and reform. Did that happen by coincidence, by a strike of luck, or through good management?

This is a question which I leave to the reader to judge for him or herself.



M. KAHIL

The dilemma of the expellees

A catalyst for peace?

By Dr. As'ad Abdul Rahman

THE COMING week will undoubtedly reveal more results of the new American Secretary of State Warren Christopher's Middle Eastern visit and his later political efforts to get the Arab-Israeli peace talks back on track. The indirect and bitherto confidential results will take somewhat longer time to materialise because their disclosure now will be attributed to direct or indirect American pressure, something which will embarrass more than one party or regime in the area.

Mr. Christopher made it clear to all parties concerned that the new American administration is deeply committed to the peace process in the area. The renewed American commitment was met by the approval of all parties to resume negotiations, albeit the Palestinian participation was linked to solving the expellees problem.

All Arab countries viewed the problem of the expellees as an "obstacle to negotiations" that ought to be solved by a concerted effort among the three major parties, the U.S., Israel and the Arabs. The ultimate solution of the problem will be a compromise with no single party emerging as the victor. The Americans will appear as an honest broker exerting no pressure on either party. Israel will emerge semi-victorious or at best the undefeated or semi-victorious party of the trio. The Arabs will also emerge as the undefeated party in a battle of political confrontation with Israel.

According to some authoritative sources, a new Israeli initiative is expected to see the light soon under this initiative, all cases of appeal submitted earlier by the expellees will be viewed favourably with the eventual result of accepting the return of all evictees. Moreover, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' early statement that expelling the 400 plus Palestinians was "an isolated incident" caused by "exceptional

circumstances" will be viewed — albeit unofficially — as Israel's stance on the issue of expulsion, a statement indirectly intended to allay the fears of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The Arab disengagement from this dilemma will most probably be phased out during the forthcoming meeting of Arab foreign ministers of the countries bordering Israel "to evaluate the result of the visit to the area of the American Secretary of State". It is most likely that Arab participation in the coming ninth round of talks will be fixed and confirmed during that meeting. A satisfactory solution to the problem of the expellees will be reached before the resumption of talks.

"The positive result of the whole issue of the expellees outweighs by far its negative implications, especially in the present balance of power."

The way the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, dealt with the issue of expellees remains highly controversial. Very few Arab political analysts view the issue as "a defeat for Arab and especially Palestinian diplomacy". To them, it was "an example of how we failed to take advantage of the golden opportunity, which Resolution 799 offered us". On the other side, however, other political observers hail the positive results of that confrontation.

Where does the truth lay amidst these two irreconcilable views? As the writer sees it, the legendary steadfastness of the expellees themselves and the brave and clear position of the Palestinian negotiating delegation, the decisive position of the PLO leadership, and especially world public opinion are all factors that much outweigh the negative aspects of the confrontation.

We believe that the issue of the expellees was cleverly utilised — in a hush-hush manner — before

and after Mr. Christopher's visit to help reach a draft for settlement. Moreover, Mr. Rabin's most recent indirect talk about a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for a peace treaty with Syria clearly upholds this view.

To sum up, it has become increasingly obvious that the "strategy of deportation" which Israel has often resorted to since 1967 is facing an increasingly hostile world public opinion. Once a corner stone of Israel's domestic policy against Palestinians and their leaders, the "policy of deportation" is now retreating under world public pressure.

Despite some statements upholding "deportation" of a sabre-rattling nature which Mr. Rabin made and later was forced to indirectly withdraw during a joint press conference with Secretary Warren Christopher on Feb. 22, and despite the American/Israeli deal regarding the "expelled" prior to Mr. Christopher's visit, observers can easily discern a tone quite different from what they used to hear from previous Likud governments.

Examples confirming this view are not hard to detect. First came Mr. Rabin's government retreat from a decision taken by the previous Likud government to expel 13 Palestinians. Then came Israel's gradual and systematic retreat from the present issue; Israel first admitted that some of the expelled were expelled by mistake! It later softened its position regarding humanitarian and medical aid to the evictees! Then came the American/Israeli deal by which 101 expelled Palestinians were to return immediately while reducing to half the expul-

sion period for the rest. Most important of all, came Mr. Rabin's and Mr. Peres' statements that the "deportation" is no longer a tool of Israel's policy. This is why, it is my belief, that Security Council Resolution 799, the official and public anti-deportation policy declared by many states and political and economic pressure exerted by the European Community will substantially freeze Israel's expulsion policy until a negotiated settlement is reached.

Although the issue of the evictees is not over yet, it was employed by many parties (including some Israelis) as a catalyst for the peace process and the promotion of human rights for the Palestinians in the occupied territories. In politics things are not judged by their appearances but rather by the amount of change they can generate, albeit such change can hardly be discerned in public.

The positive result of the whole issue of the expellees outweighs by far its negative implications, especially in the present balance of power in the area.

For the first time, Palestinian steadfastness and Arab and international pressure have succeeded in forcing Israel to succumb to pressure and implement Resolution 799, though in a piecemeal manner. Such positive developments could not have been possible without the sacrifices of the Palestinian people and international solidarity with the cause. We have every reason to believe that the tragedy of the evictees helped put the peace process on the right track.

Finally, the current surge of violence and counter violence can (and perhaps should) be seen as a harbinger of an approaching settlement rather than as a departure from it, provided that the new American administration and Europe decide to activate and increase their positive efforts.

The writer is a member of the Palestine National Council

Tajikistan

'A false sense of security'

By David Ljunggren
Reuter

DUSHANBE, Tajikistan — After months of virtual civil war between former Communists and Muslim forces in Tajikistan, some sense of normality seems to be returning to this impoverished mountainous Central Asian state.

The Muslim rebels are pinned into three mountain gorges, the capital Dushanbe is under a tight curfew and the government is concentrating on how to revive the shattered economy.

Bot Western officials and diplomats like Tajikistan, riven by age-old clan conflicts, to a keg of gunpowder which could explode at any moment.

"We look at the situation here with profound concern," said Liviu Bota, head of the United Nations office in Dushanbe.

"We consider there is a general insecurity all over the country and fear is widespread at all levels of society."

The new government took charge in January after the Muslim opposition — now officially condemned as fundamentalists who want to create a second Iran — was driven from power by the armed forces of the Tajik Popular Front, headed by ex-convict Sangak Safarov.

However no one seems to be in full control. Bursts of automatic gunfire rip through central Dushanbe each night — either front gunmen hunting down their enemies or patrols enforcing the curfew, depending on who one listens to.

"One of our main concerns is the respect for basic human rights which are being violated on a scale which should be considered unacceptable," said Mr. Bota.

"The situation is complicated by lots of factors, one being there are plenty of armed groups roaming around who are not subordinate to anyone," said Felix Dovzhenok, an adviser to the Russian ambassador on national questions.

All observers say the only stabilising force in the republic is the Russian 201st Motorised Infantry Division, whose troops are helping attack the rebels as well as guarding key buildings.

"I think we'll be here for a long time," said Lieutenant-Colonel Grigory Dyomin, commander of the division's tank battalion.

Russian officers guarding the capital's main flour mill laugh when asked about the efficiency of the local Tajik police and militia they replaced.

Popular Front officials and ministers deflect questions about how much influence the movement holds over the government. But some of the signs are clear.

Interior Ministry officials openly admit the passes they hand out to visiting correspondents are useless.

The only document which guarantees passage through the endless checkpoints dotted along the country's otherwise deserted roads is a letter bearing Mr. Safarov's signature.

"We don't give the government directions — they are in charge," said Mr. Safarov aide Sang-muhammad Zairov.

But he added: "They agree their moves with us." The doomed economy looms over any conversation — ministers say last year the fighting cost 250 billion roubles (\$434 million). Production in January fell 30 per cent compared to the same month last year.

Mr. Dovzhenok said half the republic's 400,000 Russians — many of them specialists — had left since 1989.

"I don't think the government has realised the full effect this has had," he said.

Sait-Amir Zukhurov, head of the Tajik National Security Committee, says his main concern is the tens of thousands of refugees from the southern cotton-rich Kurgan-Tyube province who fled to Afghanistan and Dushanbe.

Last year's cotton harvest, one of the best ever, lies largely rotting in the fields of Kurgan-Tyube.

"If we can get the refugees back in their homes, there won't be a war. Otherwise, things will get very complicated," he said.

In the way stands the complex make-up of Tajik society. "The whole business of fundamentalism was just a cover story — this is all about clan warfare," said one diplomat.

Tajikistan was created from three major opposing clans — the Pamiris and the Garmites in the north and the Kulyabis in the south.

In the 1930s, thousands of Garmites were forcibly moved to Kurgan-Tyube, next to Kulyab, to help harvest the cotton.

The conflict exploded as strict Communist rule withered and the warring tribes found themselves awash with arms from former Soviet army units and groups in neighbouring Afghanistan, itself riven by fierce power struggles.

When the Muslims took power last year they blockaded Kulyab, the main centre of opposition, for six months. When the tables were turned the Kulyabis blamed the Garmites and laid waste to large areas of Kurgan-Tyube.

The 5,000 refugees from Kurgan-Tyube who are crammed into the stinking Central Hotel Dushanbe are in no great hurry to go back to their destroyed homes.

"If the Russian army were there we'd go back. We just don't trust the Popular Front," said one man, surrounded by swarms of filthy chattering children.

"The situation looks desperate — if the international community could mobilise quickly we could avoid a major crisis. The potential for the conflict spreading is high," said one senior foreign official.

The vicious ethnic fighting also dealt a heavy blow to Communist attempts to portray Tajikistan as a homogenous whole, "with the various clans linked through intermarriage."

"Tajikistan was never a nation," scoffed one Kulyab soldier. "We never liked to intermarry because we knew we had to keep our blood pure."

German army

In search of a new mission

By Terrence Petty
The Associated Press

DIETSDORF, Germany — Lt. Carsten Rukhowski, a Western German, is accustomed to efficiency in both military and civilian life, so his assignment to an outpost in formerly Communist Eastern Germany can try his patience.

His unit's armoured personnel carriers are hand me downs from East Germany's National People's Army, and Mr. Rukhowski can never be sure how many will start in the morning.

"We have about 25 BMPs. But some of them stopped running long ago," he said.

The Bundeswehr is Western Europe's largest army, created in 1955 to counter a possible invasion by the Warsaw Pact. But the German military is groping for a new mission even as it grapples with internal change.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl wants the Bundeswehr to take part in international peacekeeping missions like Somalia but has been frustrated by Germany's constitution, which prevents armed German deployment on non-NATO turf.

When Germany was reunited in October 1990, the Bundeswehr took over East Germany's military installations and weapons and gradually discharged most of the 172,000 troops of the People's Army.

The Bundeswehr has about 50,000 troops out of a total force of 420,000 — stationed in former East Germany. Many are young men who grew up under the Communist system and are wary of Western German values.

Mr. Rukhowski says some of the 200 draftees and 50 officers, a mix of Eastern and Western Germans, "come here with stereotypes that resulted from

four decades of separation." Once a Warsaw Pact air defence base with surface to air missiles, the post now serves as a training camp for draftees serving 12 months of active duty.

"I have more freedom in decision making in the Bundeswehr. In the National People's Army, you had to follow every regulation to the letter," said the post commander, Lt. Lt. Ziedo Ottow, a former officer of the People's Army, one of about 5,600 now in the Bundeswehr.

Under the East German regime, he had to worry about Stasi, secret police planted in the ranks to inform on soldiers who might stray from Communist ideology.

Still, Mr. Ottow contends, the People's Army was probably better prepared for war than its West German foe. Training was more demanding, and East German soldiers were kept on nearly constant alert.

Many Germans oppose a broader foreign role for the Bundeswehr, a legacy of guilt about Nazi crimes in World War II. Many career soldiers favour a broadened international role for the Bundeswehr. But draftees at Diettsdorf, from East and West, expressed an aversion to fighting someone else's battles in former Yugoslavia, Somalia or elsewhere.

"I wouldn't volunteer to go into any war zones," said 20-year-old Michael Leonhardt, an East-German draftee.

The Bundeswehr is expected to instill democratic values and Western-style discipline in young Germans from the East.

Troops complain that army life in the East is isolated and boring. Diettsdorf, population 460, is surrounded by farmland 110 miles (190 kms) southwest of Berlin.

Difficult for talks without Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

there was no trace of cancer found during the last checkup that I had."

In Tunis, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Saturday capped a week of intensive talks by calling on Israel to allow the return of the Palestinian exiles before Palestinian-Israeli peace talks can resume next month.

But PLO sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the statement was not the final word on whether the Palestinians would participate in the talks.

The sources said further contacts with the parties to the talks would be pursued in an effort to find a solution to the crisis over the expellees. They said those parties would include Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the other Arab partners in the peace talks.

The leadership of the PLO had been meeting for a week in an effort to forge a final position on whether Palestinians should participate in the talks.

In their statement, carried by the Palestinian news agency Wafa, the PLO leaders said the exiles must be allowed to return before the Palestinians will resume talks with Israel.

PLO leaders themselves appear to be divided over the issue. They also are vying for power in the occupied territories with the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas faction, which rejects participation in the peace talks.

Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq

Al Hariri said in remarks published Saturday Lebanon would never grant nationality to hundreds of thousands of Palestinian residents who should be allowed by Israel to go back home.

"As far as we are concerned they should go back to Palestine," he told journalists, the Beirut correspondent of Kuwait's Al Qabas newspaper reported.

Mr. Hariri said Lebanon would not be pressed by Israel or any other party to give nationality to the Palestinians, which the newspaper numbered at about 350,000.

"This is for us to decide. We are an independent country... the (Israeli) tanks reached Beirut and could not impose settling them (in Lebanon)," Mr. Hariri was quoted as saying in a reference to Israel's 1982 invasion.

Arab countries have consistently rejected Israeli arguments that Arab hosts should settle within their border Palestinian refugees who have fled the Israeli-occupied territories or been made homeless by five Arab-Israeli wars in the last 45 years.

"We can't accept settling them even if the U.S. or Russia accepted it or if our brothers did," Mr. Hariri said.

Referring to the peace talks, he said: "There are negotiations, so let us wait for the results. I cannot say what is going to happen to them, but I can assert that no settling or nationalisation will happen. That is what I know, because it is in my hand as government."

FBI holds 3 more in bombing case

(Continued from page 1)

the blast wreckage to a truck rental agency. The van may have carried the bomb, authorities say.

Salameh was arrested shortly after trying to get back a \$400 deposit he had placed to rent the van.

Salameh was refusing to cooperate with authorities, said the federal source.

"Maybe they left him behind as a signature," the source said. "Maybe it was their game plan all along to leave him behind."

The federal source also linked Salameh to the Muslim Brotherhood based in Egypt.

The federal source acknowledged that Salameh made the work of investigators easier by returning to the car rental agency

office after the blast. But he cautioned against assuming Salameh is stupid.

"You can make fun of him all you want to, but this thing worked," the source said. "It worked perfectly. They all got away."

Robert Precht, Salameh's lawyer, said the government had a very weak case against his client, adding that Salameh was "highly agitated and absolutely scandalised by the charges."

The Precht said the government had no proof that Salameh was lying when he had stated that the van was in fact stolen.

"And if it is true that the van was stolen before the World Trade Centre bombing, then the government case against Mr. Salameh collapses," the lawyer said.

Violence continues in Somalia

(Continued from page 1)

"The patrol took fire. The patrol returned fire. The patrol got the hell out of there," said Air Force captain Joe Davis, a U.S. military spokesman. "If any Somalis got killed, they're the ones who shot first."

Five people were taken to Denadur hospital. A nurse, speaking on condition she not be identified, said three were dead when they arrived.

The official report of the incident said a two-vehicle patrol was moving when it took six bursts of automatic fire from nearby alleys and rooftops. The motive for the attack was unknown, the report said.

Meanwhile, a Marine suspected of using excessive force

against a Somali teen last month said foreign troops must view every Somali on the street as a menace.

"How many times in Vietnam did kids carry (explosives) into a village?" asked Sergeant Harry Conde, during a hearing Friday to decide whether he faces a court martial.

"Some people want us here. Some people don't. When you're out there, you can't tell," he said.

Sgt. Conde faces charges for shooting Ahmad Addi Omar, 13, and another teen on Feb. 2 after Omar reached into the military vehicle Sgt. Conde was riding in and stole the soldier's prescription sunglasses. Omar was wounded in the abdomen by duckshot pellets, and the 17 year old bystander was hit in the arm.

Egypt charges dozens for attacks

(Continued from page 1)

not investors' could become a target for our legitimate retribution in the near future," it added.

The group is believed to be behind the series of attacks on foreign tourists under the slogan "tourism but not tourists." By which it means that its policy is to cause damage to property, such as tourist buses, but not hurt people.

The Islamic Group, fighting Egypt's government to impose what it sees as a pure Islamic state, also claimed responsibility for killing an Egyptian intelligence officer and his son in the southern town of Assiut.

"The Islamic Group calls on Arab and foreign states to follow the course of the United States and Britain and warn their subjects to leave Egypt for the sake of their lives," the statement said.

Brotherhood sees Israeli hand in blast

(Continued from page 1)

contacts with people associated with Hamas.

The diplomatic contacts, he said, were prompted by the "success that Hamas and Islamic Jihad have achieved on the political level" in the wake of "increased resistance activities in the occupied territories" and the Dec. 17 Israeli expulsion of more than 415 Palestinians suspected of being activists of the two fundamentalist Palestinian groups.

The U.S. decision to end such dialogue was brought about by "Zionist influence," he asserted, calling on Washington to "apply logic and ascertain" whether such a course of policy bodes well for American credibility.

Mr. Mansour rejected Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) criticism of the U.S.-Hamas contacts.

"God forgive" Yasser Arafat for his criticism of Hamas, Mr. Mansour said, referring to the PLO chairman as "president of Palestine."

"We hope he will deal with all Palestinian groups without a hostile attitude."

Hamas "is an independent group with its own leadership which does not take order from any party," he added.

The Islamic Resistance Move-

ment is not a "terrorist group," he said, assailing moves launched by two American congressmen to bar its people from the U.S.

Senator Alfonse D'Amato and Representative Peter Deutch have presented legislation to the Senate and the House of Representatives to allow for the deportation of foreigners identified as members of Hamas and to ban the entry of Hamas members in the U.S. The bill aims at amending the Immigration and Naturalisation Act to list Hamas as "terrorist group."

We condemn these American moves against Hamas and express hope that the United States would resort to reason and credibility in dealing with the region," Mansour said.

Deputy Kofaween said that during their visit to the Palestinian expellees stranded in South Lebanon and living in tent camp since Dec. 17, "we found the moral strength (of the exiles) higher than ever."

"They are living in abysmal conditions," he told the press conference. "They are not getting proper food or water. They live in an area where it is extremely cold. Some of them are suffering from serious ailments. But the suffering has not weakened their morale and determination to resist all Israeli plans."

Sheikh preached revolution, turmoil in Egyptian hometown

By Dalia Baligh

The Associated Press

FAYOUM, Egypt — In the dark and cramped Martyrs' Mosque in this southern Egyptian town, Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman used to preach revolution and the violent overthrow of Egypt's secular government.

He has lived in New Jersey for almost three years now, but violent Muslim extremism races on in Egypt. A movement Sheikh Abdul Rahman once personally commanded is now run by subordinates who, the government says, take their cues from him. Their latest tactic has been to attack foreign journalists. The government has responded with a crackdown, and Sheikh Abdul Rahman's followers are among 700 extremists arrested since November.

When U.S. authorities arrested a member of Sheikh Abdul Rahman's New Jersey congregation Thursday as a suspect in the World Trade Centre explosion, the news hardly caused a ripple in Fayoum, 100 kilometres south of Cairo.

The Egyptian government accuses Sheikh Abdul Rahman of sending money to Muslim extremists in Egypt, and his voice is still heard in Egypt, in the tape-recorded sermons he sends from New Jersey.

One calls on Muslim youth to "hit hard and kill the enemies of God in every spot, to rid it of the descendants of apes and pigs fed at the tables of Zionism, communism and imperialism."

"There is no truce in Jihad (holy war) against the enemies of Allah."

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, 54 and blind, left his family and followers in 1990, obtained a U.S. visa in Sudan and went to New York before setting in New Jersey.

An associate who said he spoke with Sheikh Abdul Rahman in Detroit Friday, said the cleric denies any involvement in the trade centre bombing and condemned it.

Dr. Mohammad T. Mehdi, an Arab-American community leader in New York City, also said the sheikh's religious pronouncements should not be taken literally.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, he said, was sometimes guilty of "big talk... lots of big talk, Arab hyperbole."

That's such a big part of Arab tradition — beautiful, flowery language," Dr. Mehdi said. "But

in reality to do violence, no. It's all talk, no action."

During noon prayers in Fayoum Friday, the Martyrs' Mosque was filled with a few dozen teen-age boys and their fathers who listened to a government-appointed preacher talk strictly about religion instead of politics.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman's followers here have been either arrested or driven underground, where they have formed new cells.

Residents of Fayoum still remember the blind sheikh and readily direct visitors to his home and mosque. Police vans no longer block the roads leading there, but his family and neighbours shy away from speaking to strangers.

"My father does not allow to speak to reporters," said the

sheikh's veiled teen-age daughter, standing on the stairs leading to the family's apartment in a rundown building above a fish shop.

"He calls us every now and then. I don't know anything about the bombing in New York or this man they have arrested. I am sorry but I cannot speak to you anymore. She refused to give her name."

A man in his 20s who was grinding meat in a butcher shop near Sheikh Abdul Rahman's home said the town has been quiet since the government cracked down on the sheikh's followers. He spoke on condition of anonymity.

A paunchy man in his 40s just returning from noon prayers said he used to attend Sheikh Abdul Rahman's sermons.

This man, who also spoke of condition of anonymity, said the cleric preached violence and that many people were afraid of him and his followers.

The extremists stepped up their violence about 14 months ago first concentrating on police and Coptic Christians, their tradition at targets, then turning on foreign tourists.

"To those lamenting what happened to tourism, I say it is sinful," Sheikh Abdul Rahman said in one of his taped sermons slipped from New Jersey. "The lands of Muslims will not become dordellos for sinners of every race and colour."

Last year, 80 people were killed and 133 wounded in violence blamed on Muslim extremists. Since Jan. 1, 13 have died and 3 have been wounded.

ROC, Arab states remain friends

Association helps bridge the large gap between two cultures

By Song Su-Feng

THEY ARE few, but they are the ties that bind the Republic of China and Arab countries together in friendship.

Situated in downtown Taipei, the Sino-Arabian Cultural and Economic Association serves as a bridge for the peoples of Taiwan and Arabia. This was true when diplomatic ties still existed between the ROC and Saudi Arabia, and it has become doubly true since 1990, when the Saudis switched recognition to Peking.

"We are a private diplomatic group," said Ting Wei-tzu, the association's secretary-general.

Ting is a retired diplomat. His long, distinguished career included eight years in Arab states, from 1971 to 1977.

The association was set up in 1975 when the world was still reeling from the shock of the "energy crisis." In response to a rising call to enhance relations with the oil-rich area, the government and a group of industrial leaders acted to establish the private organisation, said Ting.

State-run firms, such as Chinese Petroleum Corp., Taiwan Fertilizer Co. Ltd. and BES Engineering Corp. comprise the bulk of the association's some 60 institutional members.

The association has five



Ting Wei-tzu



Rau Chi-li

committees: Publications, activities, membership, finance and Sino-Saudi economic and trade cooperation. Committee chairmen are selected from among the senior executives of its institutional members.

The association also has a secretariat, which consists of Ting and his staff of around five people. This section takes charge of the day-to-day business of the association.

When one considers the amount of business the association must undertake, the secretariat is really understaffed.

"Each of us must be prepared to perform a wide variety of tasks," said association secretary Rau Chi-li.

The main activities of the association are to foster cultural exchange, promote trade and economic cooperation with the Arab countries, sponsor mutual good-will visits, and do research work on Sino-Arabian cultural and economic relations.

The secretariat, in assisting government agencies, receives Arabian guests to the ROC. It also arranges education programmes for ROC groups who plan to visit Arabia to initiate them to Arab manners and customs.

"The education is necessary to avoid transgressing Islamic taboos," said Ting. To bring about a wider

understanding of the Arab World among the people of Taiwan, the association publishes a bi-monthly bulletin, the Sino-Arabian Association Bulletin. The bulletin is a very plain publication, but it serves as an important information source for local people interested in promoting links with the Arab states.

One hundred and three issues of the bulletin have already rolled off the presses. The editing is principally the work of two people, Ting and Rau Chi-li.

"The publication is plain in appearance because we are restricted by a lack of funds, and editing staff. But we are proud to say that there has never been a delay in the printing of the periodical, and there are no misprints either," said Ting.

These two editors also publish books on other Arabic topics. The publication plan aims at putting out one book per year, covering fields ranging from Islamic arts to Arabian literature and economic development.

In addition to these many duties, the association also does its best to offer hospitality to Arabs in Taiwan. There are about 100 Arabs living in Taiwan. Most of them are merchants, but some others are students.

The association holds a number of activities for local Arab



Arab and Chinese guests mingle at a Chinese New Year's party and enjoy other performances.

students. Every year around the Chinese Lunar New Year's holiday, it holds a large party, which normally attracts over 300 Chinese and Arabian guests.

"All the Arabs in Taiwan come to the occasion to have fun with Chinese people," said Rau. "And no matter where they come from — even from countries which are hostile toward each other — they at least have good times together under this roof," said Rau.

In speaking about his work in Arabia, Ting said the ROC's friendship with the Arab countries is built on the firm base of the contributions of the ROC people to Arab development. Many highways, airports,

office buildings and hospitals in the area are the results of the sweat of ROC technicians. In the 1980s, the number of Taiwan technicians, medical personnel and other workers stationed in the area reached over 10,000 people.

Among the many agricultural missions that journeyed to Arabia from many lands, the ROC achieved the greatest successes in helping Arabian agricultural development. In another notable achievement, the first heart surgery in Saudi Arabia was performed by a Taiwan doctor.

"Our friendship with Arabia has been won through hard work. It is one built from the grassroots level up," he said.

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

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Jim Courier named Player of the Year

INDIAN WELLS, California (AP) — Jim Courier, only the 10th player to be ranked No. 1 in the 21 year history of the ATP Tour rankings, was selected 1992 Player of the Year Friday night.

He was honored at the annual IBN ATP tour awards gala, which was dedicated to Arthur Ashe.

Ashe, who died Feb. 6 of AIDS related complications, was named Humanitarian of the Year. His wife, Jeanne, was to accept the award.

Courier won five events, including the Australian and French Opens, last year.

Courier and Stefan Edberg engaged in a yearlong race for No. 1 in 1992, and the lead changed hands five times.

Edberg is a past player of the year. He received the sportsmanship award as voted by the tour players.

Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge of Australia were named Doubles Team of the Year.

Andrei Medvedev, an 10-year-old from the Ukraine, received the Newcomer of the Year for his



Jim Courier

three tour victories and rise to No. 24 at the end of 1992. Frenchman Henri Leconte, who rebounded from major back surgery to conclude the year at No. 61, was named Comeback Player of the Year.

Other winners were: Henrik Holm of Sweden, Most Improved; the U.S. Hardcourts Championship in Indianapolis, Tournament of the Year for the

fourth straight time; and the late Dan Maskell, who broadcast Wimbledon for the British Broadcasting Corp., Media Excellence Award.

Proceeds from the benefit dinner will go to the Arthur Ashe Foundation for the Defeat of AIDS, Inc., the American Foundation for AIDS Research and Desert AIDS Project.

China rolls out red carpet for Olympic inspectors

BEIJING (Agencies) — A children's brass band, pre-arranged crowds, flowers and miles of banners proclaiming "Beijing 2000" greeted an Olympic inspection team in the freshly-scrubbed Chinese capital Saturday.

Beijing, hoping for a thumbs-up from the International Olympic Committee for its 2000 bid, laid on an extravagant welcome for the 12 inspectors.

Their limousines — all sporting "Beijing 2000" licence plates — swept in from the airport down avenues emptied of all traffic, past throngs of workers let out of factories to greet China's most important visitors in recent memory.

The world's last major communist country has spruced up its image for the occasion.

It sees the 2000 Olympics as a chance to proclaim its arrival in the 21st century as a friendly economic superpower. And it is desperate to erase memories in the West that link Beijing and Tiananmen Square with the brutal military crackdown on pro-democracy student demonstrators there in 1989.

"A more open China awaits 2000 Olympics," is one of the slogans daubed in bold letters all over Beijing. "Peace and progress for a better world" is another.

Workers with buckets and sponges have been swabbing down street railings. Billboard artists have plastered the city with futuristic images of urban life. Even the white road markings have been given a fresh coat of paint.

"We still have cold weather," Chen Xitong, the head of China's Olympic bid committee, told Gunnar Ericsson, the Swedish delegation head, at Beijing Airport. "However all the residents of Beijing and all the Chinese people feel warm at heart."

The inspectors looked surprised and amused when a school band dressed in white suits with red and yellow capes struck up a raucous symphony when they stepped off the plane.

"We regard the International Olympic Committee as a god, and what it says is a command to us," Zinbna News, Agency quoted Chen as saying in an interview with a Hong Kong magazine on the eve of the visit.

The inspectors have visited Sydney — widely regarded as Beijing's leading rival — ahead of Manchester, Istanbul, Brasilia, Milan and Berlin. A decision will be made at an IOC meeting in Monte Carlo September 23.

The South China Morning Post in Hong Kong, where the inspectors stopped off on the way to Beijing, Saturday quoted Ericsson as saying he did not think the Tiananmen massacre would influence the outcome.

"What we are after and what we are looking for is the facilities, the transport and the security. That is our main concern," he said.

World Youth Soccer Championship Australia beat Colombia in ill-tempered opener

SYDNEY (R) — Australian captain Kevin Muscat scored a second-half winner to give the hosts a 2-1 victory over Colombia in an ill-tempered opening match of the World Youth Soccer Championships Friday.

Australia, surprise semifinalists in the last championships in 1991, got the best possible start to the tournament when Muscat rounded off a superb move in the 23rd minute.

But the game was marred for the 31,000 crowd by niggling infringements as 10 players, seven Colombians and three Australians, were shown the yellow card for foul play or dissent.

Colombia opened the scoring against the run of play in the 35th minute when skipper Henry Zambrano caught the Australian defenders napping, beating two of them to drive his shot into the roof of the net.

The Australians, stung by the goal, struck back four minutes later when striker Ante Milicic latched on to a neat pass from Paul Agostino to cheekily chip the ball home.

The goal was a relief to Australian coach Les Scheffing. Meanwhile, Carsten Jancker's goal in the 89th minute of play Saturday gave Germany a 1-0 over defending champion Portugal in the opening Group B match of soccer's World Youth Championship.

Striker Jancker, who plays for Cologne, picked up a ball that bounced off a Portuguese defender and blasted it past goalkeeper Paulo Costinha.

The win helped avenge a 4-0 loss handed the Germans by Portugal the last time the two clubs met in the European qualifying event for this tournament.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan-less Bulls fail to Spurs

CHICAGO (R) — The San Antonio Spurs trailed by as many as 21 points and never led until late in overtime but still came away with a 107-102 victory over the Michael Jordan-less Bulls in Chicago Friday. Dale Ellis finished with 29 points and David Robinson, who played all 53 minutes, added 28 points for the Spurs. Jordan missed his second game in a row due to an infected corn on his left foot but is expected to play in the Bulls' next game Tuesday against the Seattle SuperSonics.

Sotomayer wins high jump meeting

CHICAGO (R) — World indoor and outdoor record holder Javier Sotomayer of Cuba won the first single-event high jump meeting ever in the United States Friday. Sotomayer, ranked number one in the world, had a winning height of 2.37 metres. Sotomayer, who flew in from Cuba and arrived two hours before the event began, elected to pass four heights. He made one attempt at a new world indoor record at 2.44 metres but missed and decided to save energy for the World Indoor Championships next week in Toronto.

Marseille casualty list piles up

MARSEILLE (R) — French champions Marseille said Friday injuries and suspension were forcing them to field a scratch side in Sunday's first round French Cup match with second division leaders Martigues. German striker Rudi Voeller and sweeper Basile Boli, who missed Wednesday's European Cup match with CSKA Moscow, are still on the casualty list and have been joined by defenders Marcel Desailly and Manuel Amoros. The versatile Jocelyn Angloma is suspended.

Continental club champions to play in Tunis

TUNIS (R) — Club Africain of Tunisia and Sao Paulo of Brazil plan to stage the first match between the Champions of Africa and Asia and South America and Europe in Tunis in June. Club Africain became soccer champions of Africa and Asia by beating Asian title-winners Al-Hilal of Saudi Arabia. Sao Paulo won the South America-Europe crown when they defeated Barcelona in Tokyo in December.

Delecour on course for Portuguese Rally win

ESTORIL (R) — Frenchman Francois Delecour looked set to make up for his Monte Carlo rally disappointment by winning the Portuguese round of the World Championship Saturday. Delecour held a one minute 20 seconds advantage over team mate Miki Biasion of Italy. The talented Frenchman was fastest in his Ford Escort Cosworth on the first four pre-dawn stages of the final day. Italy's Andrea Aghini came second on two of the tests in a Lancia Integrale but remained third overall, 2:24 behind the leader.

Johnson maintains innocence; IOC applauds ban

PARIS (Agencies) — No more gold medals.

No more world records.

What's more, no more combats.

Sprint star Ben Johnson is starting at a ban for life from track and field after he was caught as a drug cheat for the second time.

He'd already served a two year suspension after a doping scandal at the Olympics in Seoul in 1988, when he was stripped of the gold medal and a world record for a positive test for steroids.

A doping commission of track's world governing body, the International Amateur Athletic Federation, has ruled he is guilty again. This time it was an excess of steroid related testosterone at a meet in Montreal, Jan. 17.

According to the IAAF, the only punishment is suspension for life for the 31-year-old Canadian. The disgraced former world record holder has shamed his sport a second time and should never compete again.

But the IAAF has given Johnson the chance to explain why his testosterone level was at 10.3 times the regular level. Even a 6-1 ratio is suspiciously high but just acceptable, said Istvan Gyulai, the IAAF's general secretary.

Another IAAF source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said it was unlikely that Johnson would appeal.

"He's finished," the source said.

Meanwhile, Johnson, maintained that he has not used any banned drugs since his 1988 suspension for steroids.

"Mr. Johnson stands by his earlier statement (of Wednesday) that he has taken no prohibited substances and has engaged in no improper practices," one of Johnson's lawyers said in a statement released Friday.

Terrence O'Sullivan, one of two lawyers retained by Johnson after a Toronto newspaper reported the sprinter had failed a drug test in January, said a further statement would be made at a news conference Sunday. He said Johnson would not attend the news conference.

The lawyer's statement also said his firm had received notification that a urine sample

allegedly taken from Mr. Johnson in Montreal January 17 has been declared positive for prohibited substances.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Friday gave its support to the life ban on Johnson for drug abuse issued by the world's main athletics body.

"The IOC is pleased to learn of the decision taken by the IAAF. Doping is cheating and cheats have no place in the Olympic movement," a statement issued from IOC headquarters declared.

IOC sources said organisation president Juan Antonio Samaranch and senior aides were disappointed that Johnson should repeat the offence after being stripped of a gold medal at the Seoul Olympics in 1988.

Track star Carl Lewis said that by getting caught for using banned drugs again, Johnson could ultimately help clean up athletics, but another American track star, Edwin Moses, says it is just another black eye for the sport.

Lewis, Johnson's bitter rival and the man who replaced the Canadian as 1988 Olympic 100 metres champion and world record holder, is hopeful that Johnson's lifetime ban will have a positive effect.

"I hope this discourages other athletes from using drugs," Lewis said Friday. "We have to stop drug use in our sport."

Lewis had no sympathy for his great rival.

"I'm not terribly surprised," Lewis said. "Ben had to start running better or start looking for a job. If he used drugs I'm glad he got caught."

Former 400-metre hurdles world record holder and Olympic gold medalist Moses said the public will be turned off by the new cheating incident.

"I've always said that any time a top name is caught it gives the public more room for speculation... is someone using drugs."

"It's definitely not good for the sport," added Moses, who has played a leading role in the development of drug testing procedures by the U.S. Athletics Federation and the U.S. Olympic Committee.

The lawyer's statement also said his firm had received notification that a urine sample

Chronology of events in the career of Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson, who was banned for life for doping Friday:

1961 — Born Benjamin Sinclair Johnson, Falmouth, Jamaica.

1976 — Emigrates to Canada.

1982 — Wins Commonwealth 100 metres silver medal in Brisbane.

1984 — Wins Olympic 100 bronze in Los Angeles, first Canadian sprinter in 20 years to collect medal.

1987 — Beats Olympic champion Carl Lewis at 1987 World Championships in Rome in world record 9.83 seconds, one tenth of a second faster than previous mark.

1988 — After lackluster build-up wins Seoul Olympic final in an incredible 9.79 seconds. Tests positive for anabolic steroid stanozolol and is stripped of gold medal and banned for two years.

1989 — After denying any guilt admits to Canada's Dublin Commission that he had taken steroids and human growth hormone since 1981. Reported to police after aiming a starter's pistol at another motorist on an expressway in Toronto.

1991 — Makes unimpressive return to track, recording succession of moderate times.

1992 — Qualifies for Barcelona Olympics but is eliminated when he stumbles in blocks and finishes last in his semifinal.

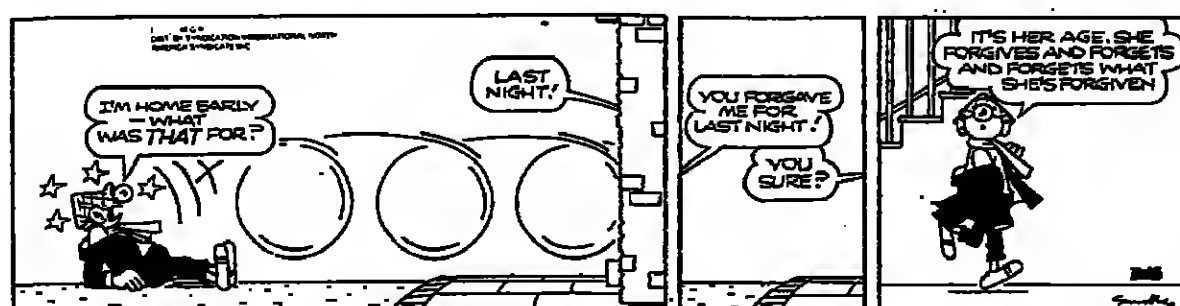
1993 — Clocks 5.65 over 50 metres in Grenoble, 0.04 of a second outside the world record. Banned for life after testing positive for testosterone at a meeting in Montreal.

"What we are after and what we are looking for is the facilities, the transport and the security. That is our main concern," he said.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY MARCH 7, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Getting your ideas better organized for the future is aided by getting up on current events, studying philosophy, talking problems through with close associates and attending religious services.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Consider well the basic wishes of all who dwell beneath the same roof as yourself and let them know you will make every effort to do what pleases them.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Letting your usual associates know what their pleasures are and aiding them to have a chance to enjoy them more makes you top of the pack.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You like the good things of life and this is the day when an opportunity is presented to you to add to your present supply of them so accept and use them.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Follow the recommendation of those who savvy your wishes and can give you the right slant how by your own acumen you can bring them to yourself.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Take some time out today to study how far you have advanced, the distance to be traversed and estimate the time to do so.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your perceptions today tell you who you can rely upon as friends and those who are merely using you so be quiet and let answers come to the surface.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You need more education to become aware of the various facets of your activities by which you will be able to realise greater amounts of gain.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) If you want to have a good time now make sure you go along with a

THE BETTER HALF

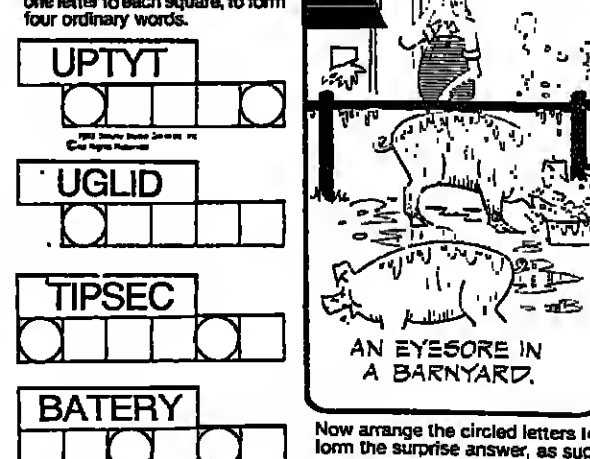
By Glasbergen



"I'm going to keep annoying you until you drop everything and write me a love letter!"

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

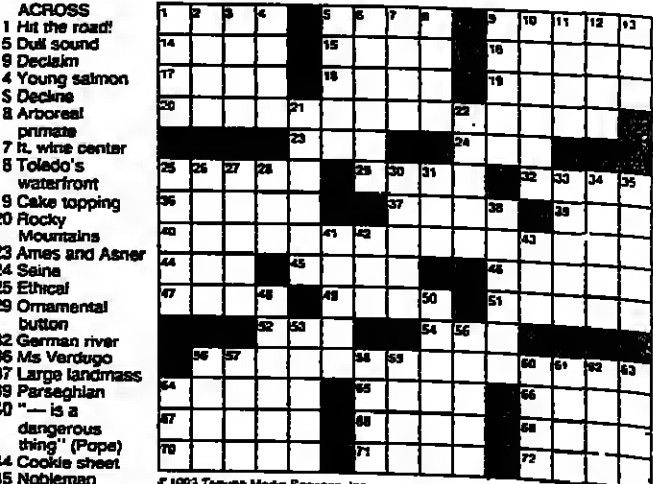
Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: SNACK ICILY FROLIC RENORER

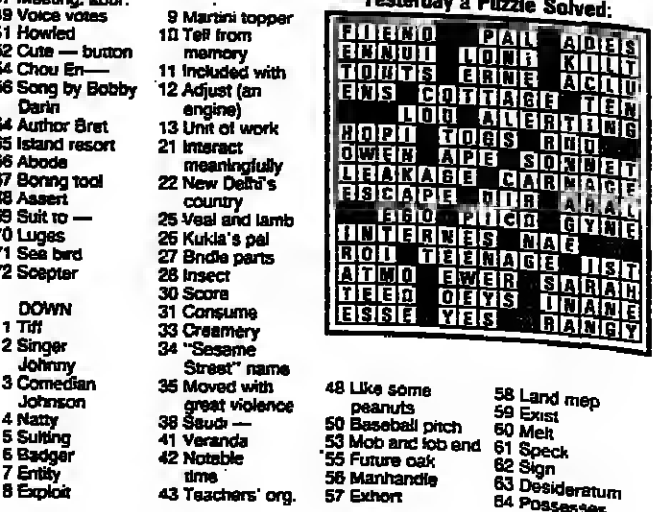
Answer: The golfer had several of these — IRONS IN THE FIRE

THE Daily Crossword

by Dorothy B. Martin



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



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JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	42,455	4.740	4.800	4.750
CREDIT AMMAN BANK	112,100	26.020	25.000	24.000
JORDAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	11,000	22.000	22.000	22.000
THE JORDAN BANK	30,537	3.800	3.900	3.870
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	40,450	3.760	3.760	3.776
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	50,801	2.420	2.500	2.496
JORDAN BANK FOR TRADING & INVESTMENT	45,233	5.580	5.550	5.550
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,545	4.370	4.320	4.350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,507	3.940	3.910	3.930
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	7,013	3.100	3.150	3.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	21,000	6.000	6.000	6.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	7,233	3.300	3.350	3.350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	45,122	1.740	1.740	1.740
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	866	3.400	3.400	3.400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	730	3.500	3.500	3.490
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,980	3.520	3.520	3.480
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	119,399	3.860	3.830	3.880
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	7,554	3.770	3.770	3.770
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,496	1.750	1.740	1.730
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	55	1.080	1.100	1.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	16,230	4.350	4.400	4.400
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,400	1.700	1.710	1.690
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,613	0.910	0.910	0.910
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,024	1.180	1.180	1.190
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,278	1.250	1.250	1.250
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,463	2.240	2.240	2.230
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	7,122	2.300	2.340	2.350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	29,919	9.940	10.000	9.940
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,511	1.800	1.800	1.800
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	296	2.750	2.750	2.750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	44,433	5.650	5.730	5.740
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	16,438	1.030	1.030	1.030
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	31,853	1.470	1.470	1.470
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	29,589	2.820	2.820	2.970
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4,988	14.300	14.250	14.250
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,445	0.630	0.630	0.620
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	291,564	6.420	6.480	6.550
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	3,432	4.050	4.040	4.040
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	6,013	1.500	1.500	1.500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	36,394	5.396	5.410	5.400
GRAND TOTAL	1,451,653			

NO. OF TRADING SECTIONS IN PARALLEL MARKET: 57400
TRADING VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET: 1.20 64530

Afghans complain of banking chaos

KABUL (R) — Afghanistan's central bank has enough money to meet the needs of depositors but is having difficulty transporting banknotes around a country where highway robbery is becoming commonplace, bank officials said.

Long queues of angry customers form daily outside the bank in the shell-shattered capital Kabul.

Many are government employees trying to collect their salaries and businessmen wanting to withdraw their deposits.

Merchants, shopkeepers and businessmen complain they are unable to obtain funds in Kabul after depositing their money in banks in other parts of the country for safe transfer to the capital.

"The state bank has sufficient money," one bank official has said. "But transport is difficult because of security reasons." He declined to be named.

The banknotes must be brought from the former Soviet Union where they are printed under a longstanding government agreement with Afghanistan's former invaders.

Bank officials refused to comment officially, saying the bank's president, Ghulam Mohammad Yaiq, left Kabul to attend a meeting of the International Monetary Fund in London late last year and has not returned. They said he had settled in Britain.

Mr. Yaiq headed the central bank under the former communist government and retained the job after the Mujahedeen took power last April. Most officials of the former government have since fled, fearing retribution by their new Islamic rulers.

Afghanistan is printing money to meet the country's needs despite the almost complete absence of government revenue, the official said.

"There are no taxes, no customs, no tourists and most of the foreign embassies have evacuated their offices here in Kabul," he said.

"Afghanistan has enough gold and silver on which the money is printed," he explained. He declined to reveal the size of the gold reserves.

The official said the bank introduced an interest rate of 11 per cent on deposits three months ago and planned to offer the same rate for 1993.

However, he voiced concern at a decrease in the number of depositors and said the trend was gathering speed.

Most customers waiting outside the bank had plenty of complaints.

Several hundred government employees have staged noisy demonstrations outside the presidential palace to demand payment of their salaries, delayed for months.

One trader from the southern city of Kandahar said he had deposited three million afghanis (\$2,250) in the bank there last November and was given a cheque on which to collect the money in Kabul.

"I come every day but the answer is that there is no cash and so I haven't received my money," he said.

Unemployment in Germany nears 3 million

BONN (R) — German unemployment climbed closer towards its highest level since World War II in February as the country's economy slipped further into recession, the Federal Labour Office said Friday.

Unadjusted joblessness in former West Germany rose by 30,000 from January to 2.29 million, representing a jobless rate of 8.4 per cent. It was well up on the February 1992 figure of 1.86 million.

West German unemployment is only slightly below the 2.30 million recorded in 1985, the highest annual average since the office started calculating the data in 1948.

Seasonally-adjusted unemployment climbed by 40,000 to 2.10 million in February.

In eastern Germany, where the government is pumping in massive funds to sponsor temporary job-creation schemes, unemployment, slipped by 10,000 to 1.18 million for a jobless rate of 15 per cent.

"There is little reason to be pleased with the labour market at the moment," Bernhard Jagoda, president of the labour office, said in a statement.

The weak economy, immigration and an unusually cold winter pushed up unemployment as well as the number of short-time workers in February, he said.

The number of short-time workers surged to 1.04 million in west Germany from 856,799.

Economists said the recession would boost west German seasonally-adjusted unemployment by between 40,000 and 50,000 a month to over 2.5 million next year.

"I think it is the beginning of a structural shake-up in the labour market," said Richard Reid, chief European economist at brokers UBS Phillips Drew in Frankfurt. "We will see higher unemployment month after month after month."

The government expects the west German economy to shrink up to one per cent this year, the first contraction for a decade, although many economists see a decline of two per cent.

In response to fiercer foreign competition, many German firms are moving production to countries with lower labour costs and introducing less labour-intensive production methods.

Government plans not to fund any new job creation programmes in 1993 because of budget strains will add to the pressure, particularly in east Germany, where 314,500 people were under such schemes in February.

"If this (the job creating schemes) stopped overnight, you would add 20 to 25 per cent to unemployment in eastern Germany," Mr. Reid said.

Russia stops paying Soviet debt

MOSCOW (R) — Russia, displaying a tough new attitude to creditors and neighbouring states, said Friday it would not pay back debts built up by the former Soviet Union until creditors had agreed a big rescheduling deal.

Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Shokhin told a news conference Russia was paying back loans offered to Moscow after the Soviet Union fell apart in December 1991, but would not repay former Soviet debt until the Paris Club of creditor states agreed to allow more time to pay.

"We are ready to confirm that we will pay for all Russian credit lines — only Russian," said Mr. Shokhin, who is also Russia's chief debt negotiator. "We will wait for agreement with the Paris Club before we pay former Soviet Union debt."

Russia has said it cannot afford to service debts of \$80 billion built up by the former Soviet Union and it wants the Paris Club and the London Club of commercial bank creditors to reschedule the debts.

But a Paris Club deal has stalled amid bickering between Russia and Ukraine over who should pay what. Arrears are mounting while Russia and its creditors talk about what to do.

"From a financial point of view it is not effective to make payments on debts which will soon be rescheduled," Mr. Shokhin said.

He said asking Russia to pay too much risked sharply lower energy sales to other former Soviet republics as Moscow struggled for hard currency export earnings.

A press statement, amplifying Mr. Shokhin's comments, said high debt payments would force Russia to switch energy exports from CIS countries to Western states prepared to pay hard currency for oil and gas.

"There is no need to mention the likely grave consequences of such compulsory measure for CIS countries and for the climate in the region as a whole," it said.

Mr. Shokhin warned that failure to agree a rescheduling deal could endanger future grain imports from the United States, placing new strains on the U.S. budget deficit and forcing Russia to seek new grain suppliers.

"Of course we are not going to withdraw completely from the U.S. market... but the longer this period of uncertainty lasts, the lower U.S. grain exports will be this year and the more the U.S. will have to pay to store grain and subsidise farmers," he pointed out.

Russia, the world's biggest grain importer, has built up arrears of almost \$450 million on agricultural loans offered to the Soviet Union by the United States.

Mr. Shokhin said Russia would be looking for new farm credits from the United States, although it was not yet clear if these could be released before a Paris Club rescheduling deal.

A future deal would treat all creditors equally, he said, admitting that Russia had favoured the United States in debt repayments it made in 1992.

"We cannot make payments on American credits but make no payments on German or French ones," he said. "We want an agreement... based on the equal treatment of all creditors."

Mr. Shokhin said Russia accepted it could pay \$3.5 billion to service debts this year.

But rescheduling proposals hammered out in December during a visit to Russia by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl would mean Russia had to pay an unacceptable \$5.1 billion in 1993.

"Signing an agreement with conditions which we know in advance will be unacceptable will lead to its violation," the press release said.

"This will complicate (efforts) to attract new credits and will have a negative effect on western countries' exports to our vast market," it concluded.

Latvia brings in first lat banknotes

MOSCOW (R) — Latvia brought in its first lat banknotes Friday to replace the temporary Latvian rouble which ousted Russia's rouble last year.

Central bank spokesman Edjus Vejins said the introduction of five-lat notes had passed without a hitch. The lat is the Baltic state's third monetary unit in less than a year.

"We think that the introduction of our first lat banknotes was quite successful," he said. Other denomination banknotes would be brought into circulation within a month, he added.

The rouble was used when the country was part of the Soviet Union but was replaced by a temporary Latvian rouble last year.

One lat is worth 200 Latvian roubles or about \$1.30.

ITAR-TASS news agency quoted top Latvian officials as saying that a sharp fall in inflation and the Latvian rouble's stability against the dollar meant the time was ripe to begin introducing the lat.

Mr. Vejins said Latvia planned to make its fledgling currency convertible on world markets by the summer. But TASS quoted Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis as saying there was no need to make the currency convertible immediately.

"We dropped the idea of tying our currency tightly to a hard currency because it puts too high a responsibility on the economy," he said.

Latvia's Baltic neighbour Estonia is the only former Soviet republic which has introduced a convertible currency so far, pegging its kroon unit to the German mark.

China breaks state oil trade monopolies

SINGAPORE (R) — China has broken up state monopolies for importing and exporting crude and refined products to bring an ambitious programme of market reforms to the oil sector.

The move, which has created two new firms and revamped a third, will mean more competition in the industry, Chinese officials said.

Previously China had three major oil firms, each devoted to one area of the business. But business had begun to overlap in recent years, especially in the lucrative refining sector.

The reorganisation essentially creates more integrated companies, each able to import and export crude oil and refined petroleum products, Chinese officials said in telephone interviews from Beijing.

"In the past we separated the functions by exploration, production and marketing and sales among CNPC, Sinopec and Sinochem. No the picture has changed," said Zhang Xisen, president of the China National United Oil Corp. (Chinaoil) one of the two newly-created companies.

The other newcomer to the oil industry is China International United Petroleum and Chemicals Co. Ltd. (Unipech).

"Each of us can run refineries, import and export crude and products in future," Mr. Zhang said.

"That's a logical change as all international oil firms run upstream and downstream businesses themselves. They don't delegate functions to the others. Now... there's no more monopoly in China's petroleum industry," he pointed out.

In the past, Sinochem, a state-owned foreign trade company, was the sole agent for China to import and export crude oil and petroleum products since the 1950s.

Sinopec, another state-run firm, has run 95 per cent of the refineries in China. Established in 1983, it is China's largest petrochemical producer.

CNPC, set up in 1989, was the state-owned firm responsible for all oil and gas exploration. It also has some refineries.

The reforms are seen as an important change that will shake up the oil sector of Asia's biggest energy user and the world's third largest user behind the U.S. and the former Soviet Union.

China has the world's fourth-largest refining capacity and ranks seventh in oil production. In 1989, it became a net product importer and is likely to become a net crude importer by the mid-1990s as economic reforms fuel rapid development.

Chinaoil is a 50-50 joint venture of CNPC and Sinochem. It has registered capital of 100 million yuan (\$17.5 million).

Unipech also has registered capital of 100 million yuan and is a 50-50 joint venture between Sinopec and Sinochem.

Unipech's scope includes imports and exports of crude and products, petrochemicals and machinery as well as domestic and overseas investment in petrochemical production and trade.

"The changes were a major step in the reform in our foreign trading system," a senior Unipech official said.

Financial Markets
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 4/3/93	New York Close Date 5/3/93
Sterling Pound	1.4560	1.4460
Deutsche Mark	1.6399	1.6693
Swiss Franc	1.5201	1.5458
French Franc	5.5670	5.6555
Japanese Yen	116.50	117.62
European Currency Unit	1.1785	1.1668

* USD Per STG
** European Opening @ 8:00 a.m. GMT

Forex Interest Rates Date: 5/3/1993

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.18	3.12	3.25	3.50
Sterling Pound	6.13	5.94	5.68	5.56
Deutsche Mark	8.25	7.81	7.37	6.75
Swiss Franc	5.25	4.93	4.75	4.47
French Franc	11.37	11.37	10.25	9.18
Japanese Yen	3.37	3.21	3.12	3.09
European Currency Unit	9.12	8.87	8.75	8.12

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Precious Metals Date: 5/3/1993

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	329.65	6.35	Silver	3.59	.080

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 6/3/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6920	0.6940
Sterling Pound	0.9997	1.0047
Deutsche Mark	0.4140	0.4161
Swiss Franc	0.4473	0.4495
French Franc	0.1222	0.1228
Japanese Yen	0.5879	0.5908
Dutch Guilder	0.3685	0.3703
Swedish Krona	0.0894	0.0898
Italian Lira	0.0438	0.0440
Belgian Franc	0.02015	0.02023

Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 6/3/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8110	1.8260
Lebanese Lira	0.038450	0.04150
Saudi Riyal	0.1840	0.1850
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2220	2.2450
Qatari Riyal	0.1873	0.1886
Egyptian Pound	0.1940	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7700	1.7870
UAE Dirham	0.1873	0.1886
Greek Drachma	0.31035	0.31540
Cypriot Pound	0.13978	0.14088

Per 100

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	24/2/93 Close	3/3/93 Close
All-Share	191.66	190.25
Banking Sector	154.14	132.56
Insurance Sector	213.22	212.07
Industry Sector	271.37	270.29
Services Sector	250.47	248.36

December 31, 1990 = 100

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20 to 30 are dying daily in besieged eastern Bosnia town

TUZLA, Bosnia (R) — An aid official reported from the besieged Muslim town of Srebrenica Saturday that at least 2,000 sick and wounded people were dying at the rate of 20 to 30 a day.

Dr. Simon Mardel of the World Health Organisation said in a radio broadcast to United Nations officials in Tuzla that 9,000 women and children wanted to be evacuated from the settlement in the eastern Bosnian mountains and that number could double.

At the U.N. headquarters in New York, peace talks were in danger of adjourning this weekend without solution. Mediators were press Bosnia's Muslim leaders to accept a key map dividing the republic into 10 semi-autonomous provinces.

Anders Levinson, from the office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Tuzla, said: "Dr. Mardel told us conditions were as bad as has been reported."

Dr. Mardel went to the region with General Philippe Morillon, the French commander of U.N. peacekeeping forces in Bosnia, who was trying to reach the Muslim settlement of Cerka about 50 kilometres north of Srebrenica.

He said that Gen. Morillon had been stopped by the last Serb checkpoint outside Cerka.

"A U.N. spokesman in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo said Cerka was being shelled while Gen.

Morillon watched.

When he demanded the firing stop, Gen. Morillon was told that it was in response to a Muslim attack.

Gen. Morillon headed back to Tuzla after being held up at the Serb checkpoint, a U.N. source said Saturday.

A helicopter had been sent from Gen. Morillon's Bosnian base of Kiseljak to the northern town of Tuzla to pick him up, the U.N. source in the Croatian capital Zagreb said.

"He is on his way back to Tuzla and a helicopter has been sent from Kiseljak for him," said the source, who had been in radio contact with U.N. officers in Kiseljak.

Dr. Mardel found 200 bedridden severely wounded people in Srebrenica which has been blocked by Serb forces since the Bosnian civil war began last spring.

Hundreds of people were suffering from ailments ranging from pneumonia to malnutrition.

At least 4,000 refugees from Cerka and Konjevic Polje have taken shelter in Srebrenica, a well-defended stronghold of Muslim fighters waging a guerrilla war against the Serbs.

Gen. Morillon led the mission to plan the evacuation of Muslim civilians from snowbound east Bosnia.

Dr. Mardel said a major obstacle would be the lack of a road

between Srebrenica and Konjevic Polje capable of taking the weight of UNHCR trucks which are standing by.

UNHCR officials in Belgrade said it was unlikely an evacuation could begin Saturday.

Gen. Morillon decided to go to eastern Bosnia without seeking approval from the Serbs to check at first hand on anguished amateur radio reports from the Muslim enclave describing rapidly deteriorating conditions.

The broadcasts said Cerka was being heavily attacked by Serb forces apparently intent on its capture.

A U.N. aid convoy bound for Zepa, another Muslim town blocked in eastern Bosnia, was allowed to enter the region from neighbouring Serbia Saturday despite a Serb ban on movement of aid.

General Ratko Mladic, commander of the Bosnian Serb army, ordered the ban Friday after shells slammed into a 16-truck convoy outside Sarajevo Airport, injuring four people.

Gen. Mladic blamed Muslim militia for firing at the vehicles and said no further humanitarian convoys would be allowed to travel until U.N. peacekeepers and the International Red Cross guaranteed their safety.

"All convoys in former Bosnia-Herzegovina have been postponed until further notice because their safety cannot be

guaranteed," Geo. Mladic said in a statement he read personally to Reuters by telephone.

U.N. military observers at the airport later confirmed that the mortar and machinegun attack had been launched from Muslim positions.

Meanwhile, five U.S. Air Force cargo planes dropped 27 tonnes of food around the embattled Bosnian towns of Srebrenica and Konjevic and returned safely to base in Germany Saturday, the U.S. military said.

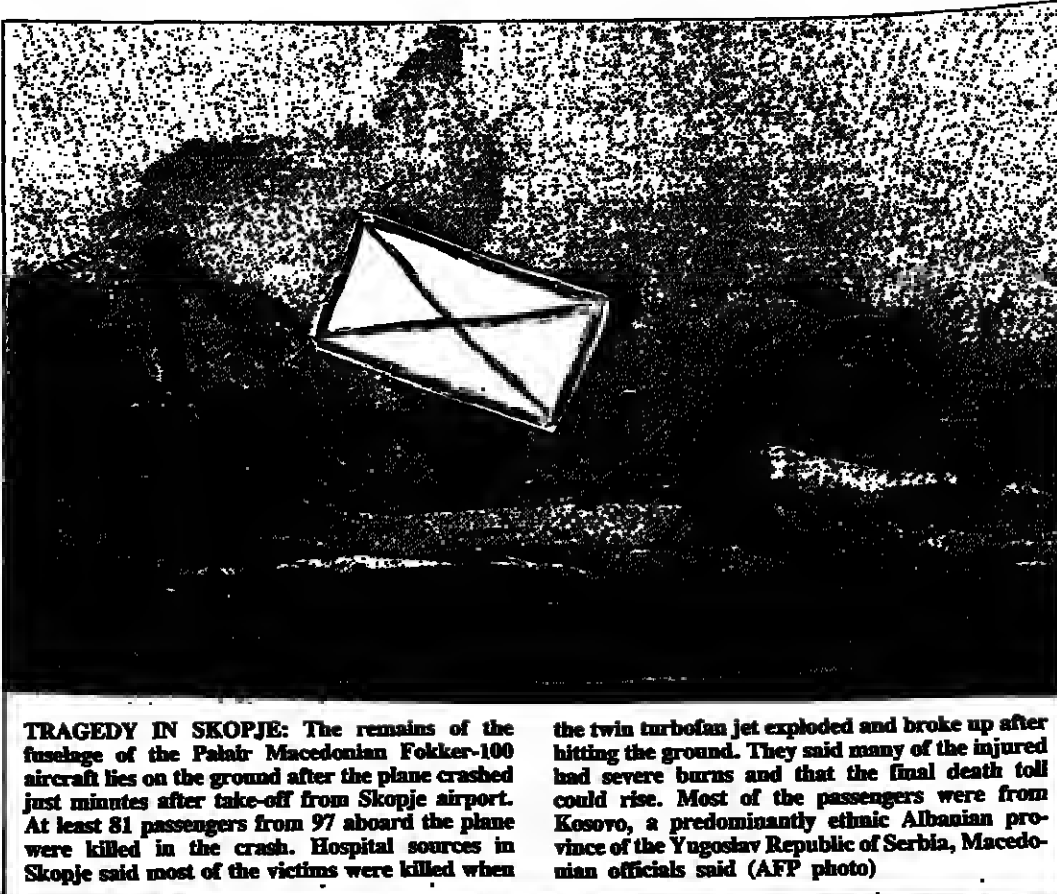
The C-130 aircraft, flying the lights-out aid run for the sixth night in a row, also dropped 0.8 tonnes of medicines around the two towns, where refugees have swollen the number of residents.

"The aidrop missions were completed without incident," the military said in a statement.

"Srebrenica was selected for tonight's humanitarian mission because the population is increasing and they have not received any truck convoy since Dec. 10, 1992," it said.

"Konjevic was also chosen because of the rapidly increasing refugee population and our intent to supplement what sufficient supplies cannot be delivered by convoys."

"We are continuing to work closely with UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) to identify all areas of humanitarian need, regardless of political affiliation."



TRAGEDY IN SKOPJE: The remains of the fuselage of the Palair Macedonian Fokker-100 aircraft lies on the ground after the plane crashed just minutes after take-off from Skopje airport. At least 81 passengers from 97 aboard the plane were killed in the crash. Hospital sources in Skopje said most of the victims were killed when

the twin turbofan jet exploded and broke up after hitting the ground. They said many of the injured had severe burns and that the final death toll could rise. Most of the passengers were from Kosovo, a predominantly ethnic Albanian province of the Yugoslav Republic of Serbia, Macedonian officials said (AFP photo)

COLUMN

Clinton to get honorary degree from Oxford

OXFORD, England (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton is to receive an honorary degree from Britain's Oxford University — something refused to former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The university, where Mr. Clinton studied as a Rhodes scholar from 1968 to 1970, said Friday it had bestowed its highest accolade on U.S. President Bill Clinton without dissent. The university's governing body, or "congregation," of 3,000 professors decided to forego a vote on Mr. Clinton's nomination for a degree by diploma, awarded only to heads of state and royalty, because it was unopposed, a spokeswoman said.

Hirohito's widow turns 90

TOKYO (AP) — Empress Dowager Nagako, the widow of Emperor Hirohito, marked her children and attendants. Palace officials said Empress Nagako received congratulations from her son Emperor Akihito, daughter in law Empress Michiko and grandson Crown Prince Naruhito, who is to be married this spring. The empress Dowager has virtually disappeared from the public eye since the death in 1989 of Emperor Hirohito, who is now known in Japan by his posthumous name, Showa. Empress Nagako has been confined to a wheelchair for years, and her general health is frail. Little information about her is released by the palace, and her total seclusion has added to concerns about her condition. Empress Nagako married Emperor Hirohito in 1924, and bore seven children. Because the first four were girls, some court officials had pressured Hirohito to take a concubine to ensure there would be a male heir to the throne. In 1933, however, she gave birth to Emperor Akihito.

Thousands await appearance of Virgin Mary

AGOO, Philippines (AP) — Huge crowds gathered Saturday on this northern town to wait for an apparition of the Virgin Mary as Roman Catholic officials warned the faithful to be wary of miracles. Several people, including one radio reporter, claimed to have seen an apparition about 1:15 p.m. (0515 GMT) on a hill outside this tobacco growing town of 42,000 people some 120 miles (190 kilometres) north of Manila. The reporter, Mon Francisco, said over Manila radio station DXZL that a silhouette of a woman wearing a dark waistband appeared for a few seconds. Mr. Francisco said he had not expected to see the apparition. "Reports of apparitions of the Virgin Mary are widely believed in the Philippines, where about 85 per cent of the people are Roman Catholic. From time to time, people here claim to have seen Jesus Christ, visitors from outer space and spirits of the dead. In recent weeks, interest in the apparition spread through the main Philippine island of Luzon after a 12-year-old boy, Judiel Nieva, claimed to have seen the Virgin Mary on the first Saturday of the month and special religious feasts since 1989. Nieva's family owns an image of Mary, which was said to have been shedding tears of blood last month. Residents of Agoo claim Nieva is a seer and that communion turns to flesh and blood in his mouth."

2-day weekends expensive, exhausting for many Japanese

TOKYO (AP) — Many Japanese are unhappy with their two day weekends, complaining of added expenses and exhaustion from going out, according to a private survey. Despite a government-backed drive to reduce work hours, Japanese are unable to coordinate their time off very well, said Yokio Matsumoto, a researcher at the Postal Savings Study. The study, which gave no percentage of error, consisted of 100 random interviews in downtown Tokyo last October. "There are still problems in other areas, such as living environment and options for play," Mr. Matsumoto said. Ninety-six per cent of the respondents said either they or their spouses have a two-day weekend. In recent years, major businesses have adopted a five-day workweek, started taking Saturdays off last year. But nearly three-quarters of type of respondents expressed some type of dissatisfaction with their being that it was too expensive and tiring, Mr. Matsumoto said.

S. Africa to resume constitution talks on April 5

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Leaders from across South Africa's political spectrum voted Saturday to resume full-scale constitutional negotiations within a month.

The 26 participants at a planning conference outside Johannesburg — including the government, the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) — passed a resolution that "the multi-party forum should be reconvened as a matter of national urgency not later than April 5."

Only the right-wing Conservative Party did not vote for the resolution, saying it wanted to reserve its position.

After the vote delegates to the two-day conference which began Friday began debating a resolution on the violence in which nearly 8,000 blacks have died in three years.

In the latest bloodshed, four men and six women were killed in an ambush in Natal province Friday evening.

The ambush was staged a few kilometres from where six children were massacred on their way to school Tuesday.

Officials from 26 white and black parties attending the two-day planning conference in Johannesburg expressed horror.

"It is clear certain forces are trying to frustrate the efforts we are making here," ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa told reporters.

"We are beginning to see a link... there may well be people trying to derail the talks."

Frank Mdlalose, chief delegate of the rival Inkatha, said, "we weep and mourn yet again. This is clearly a political killing, well planned, and we think it was meant to scuttle the talks."

Although delegates appeared stoical in public about the killings, feelings ran deep behind the conference arena.

Sue Vos, a senior Inkatha official, accused Mr. Ramaphosa of cynicism in calling for a minute's silence for violence victims at yesterday's opening session.

"The ANC has the utter gall to call for a minute's silence while they are killing our people in Natal. Read what you want into that," she told reporters.

Essop Pahad, a delegate of the ANC-allied Communist Party, angrily demanded the killers be brought to justice and questioned the role of the security forces.

"What were the army and police doing when they say they saturated the area after the Tuesday massacre? How is it possible for another massacre to take place?" he demanded.

"Kriel must answer. These bloody massacres must stop."

Law and Order Minister Herens Kriel announced Friday that three people had been arrested in connection with the murder of the children, three of whom were offspring of an Inkatha official.

Mr. Kriel told reporters Saturday he did not believe the killings were directly connected with the conference and called on Natal leaders to "do something about it."

Yeltsin wants compromise with parliament rivals

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin pleaded Saturday for compromise in a power struggle with the conservative parliament, attempting to defuse tension which many fear could tear the country apart.

"I favour reconciliation, I favour an end to confrontation between the various branches of power," the Russian Information Agency (RIA) quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying.

Mr. Yeltsin and parliamentary Chairman Ruslan Khabulov have been at loggerheads for months over who rules Russia.

Both opponents and supporters of the president believe the power struggle could destabilise the country and even lead to its disintegration.

Some parliamentarians say the situation is more worrying than at any time since the failed August 1991 coup against then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

The coup was put down after three days by forces loyal to Mr. Yeltsin. Its failure led to the break-up of the Soviet Union.

"The situation in the country now strongly resembled the one in which the Supreme Soviet (parliament) of the Soviet Union was disbanded," conservative deputy Vyacheslav Lyubimov told parliament Friday.

But Defence Minister Pavel Grachev vowed the armed forces would stay neutral in the power struggle between Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Khabulov.

"The army... will abide by the constitution. It will not participate in political games — that would be dangerous," Mr. Grachev told the government daily newspaper Rossiiskii Vestnik.

The minister banned all troop movements and military exercises in the Moscow district during a special session of the Congress of the People's Deputies to avoid stirring emotions.

The Congress, elected under rules drawn up in the old Soviet Union, is Russia's supreme legislature.

Parliament had decided Friday to call a special session of the Congress for next Wednesday to discuss the issue. Legislators rejected a Yeltsin proposal to share power.

But speaking to business leaders Saturday, Mr. Yeltsin played down parliament's decision.

"I am sorry parliament failed to support my proposals. I am not discouraged and will look for new options," Interfax News Agency quoted him as saying.

Mr. Yeltsin had proposed a "constitutional deal" by which the president and parliament would each give up some powers to give the government a free hand to forge ahead with economic reforms.

He has said if parliament rejects his proposals he will go ahead next month with a referendum designed to ask who should rule Russia, parliament or the president.

Earlier this week, Mr. Yeltsin warned parliament he might resort to a "final option" to end the power struggle should the referendum be abandoned — a clear hint he was considering the introduction of some form of emergency rule.

But on Saturday the president indicated he might abandon the referendum instead.

"If parliament does not agree to a referendum or a constitutional deal, I will look for other roads to harmony," RIA quoted Mr. Yeltsin as saying.

He suggested Congress should adopt a "law on power" defining the authorities of president and parliament precisely. There is no clear division of powers in the present constitution.

Diana ends visit to Nepal

KATHMANDU (R) — Britain's Princess Diana Saturday ended a five-day visit to Nepal, where she practised her new role as comforter of the sick and downtrodden.

On her first trip abroad since separating from Prince Charles, Princess Diana held hands with lepers, cuddled emaciated Nepali children, and spoke with their mothers about health care and family planning.

"I hope that my work here will encourage more people to join in," Princess Diana, the mother of two young princes, told reporters before flying home to London via New Delhi.

Wearing a blue dress with satin collar and cuffs, Princess Diana was seen off at Kathmandu's airport by Nepal's Crown Prince Dipendra and Prime Minister Gijra Prasad Koirala.

She was accompanied on the tour, meant to publicise British aid projects in one of the world's 10 poorest countries, by British Minister For Overseas Development Lynda Chalker.

The princess did not appear distracted during her visit to the Himalayan kingdom by the airing on an Australian television station Monday of tapes of a conversation suggesting a very close relationship with a male friend.

On the tapes, a woman's voice sounding like Princess Diana's expresses a fear of getting pregnant. Buckingham Palace has declined to comment.

The princess, an admirer of Nobel Peace Prize winner Mother Teresa, arrived in Nepal Tuesday on a visit clearly meant to demonstrate that she is not just a character in a royal soap opera.

Yeltsin gets support from Clinton

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton has given embattled Russian President Boris Yeltsin political and moral support in advance of their April 3-4 summit in Vancouver, Canada — and Mr. Clinton says he won't go to the summit empty-handed.

"I'm going there to this meeting to aggressively engage the United States in the economic and political revitalisation of Russia," he told reporters Friday in announcing the site of his first face-to-face talks with his Russian counterpart.

Mr. Clinton said he would "try to be rather specific" in terms of what the United States is prepared to do, and "try to offer some innovative solutions to the difficulties faced by the President (Yeltsin) and the Russian people."

Mr. Yeltsin's efforts towards reforms in Russia are under fire from conservatives and the Russian economy is going through an economic downturn worse than the depression.

The volatility of the situation in the onetime citadel of communism has been linked to the turmoil that existed before the August 1991 coup against then-Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that propelled Mr. Yeltsin into his current position.

At an impromptu news conference, Mr. Clinton called Mr. Yeltsin "a man of real courage and real commitment to democracy," and said he would discuss financial aid to Russia during the summit as well as other ways to strengthen democracy there.

"Money will be discussed," the president told reporters. "But it's not just a question of money, and it's certainly not money alone."

He said he had not "put a figure" on an aid package, but also planned to offer Mr. Yeltsin "some rather innovative things that have not been on the table in these discussions in the past."

Mr. Clinton said their talks in Vancouver, a relaxed and picturesque city on Canada's Pacific coast, would "not be a meet-and-greet meeting."

"We have met before, and we have talked several times since I have been in office. I am going there to try to have a very business-like meeting," he said.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher told reporters later that the new administration "intends to do everything we can to shore up the government in Russia, to give it all the aid we possibly can."

Mr. Christopher said one option under consideration is what was described by the Washington Post Friday as a multi-billion dollar programme that would serve as a social safety net for Russians facing hardships due to hyperinflation and restructuring of the economy.

"It seems to me we ought to consider a... wide range of means to try to provide assistance to the Russian government as it goes through this transition period but as far as exactly what form it would take, I wouldn't want to comment today," Mr. Christopher said.

Italian opposition parties fire opening shots in morals debate

ROME (R) — Italian opposition parties, in the shots of a parliamentary debate on political morality, fired Saturday over government plans to defuse the country's widening bribery scandal.

"The interests of corrupt political parties have triumphed over those of the people who want justice," said Northern League member of parliament (MP) Marco Formentino.

L'Indipendente newspaper called a package unveiled by Prime Minister Giuliano Amato's cabinet Friday "a cop-out" while the anti-mafia party La Rete vowed to walk out of parliament if justice is obstructed.

The issue looks set to play a major part in Tuesday's debate on political morals in which opposition parties led by the ex-Communists of the PDS plan an all-out onslaught on the government.

"The battle now will be in

parliament," commented the PDS newspaper L'Unita.

The government Friday approved a series of measures aimed at staunching the flow of the country's political and business leaders into jail as the bribery scandal gathers pace.

The central plank of the so-called "political solution" to the crisis is a decree which will change the law on political party funding, around which much of the scandal revolves.

Many of the scores of politicians caught taking bribes from businessmen to exchange for public works contracts have claimed the money was destined solely for party funds.

Independent analysts agree Italy's restrictive and outdated party funding laws are unrealistically harsh on the country's parties. Trade unions, for example, can receive much more.

Now the aim is to make accept-

ing funds for political parties a much less serious crime, no longer punishable by jail.

Those convicted, however, will have to repay three times the amount of the bribe and leave public or business life for two to five years.

The decree comes into force immediately, although it will lapse if parliament does not approve it within 60 days.

The more serious offences of corruption, embezzlement and receiving, with which many suspects are charged, will not be affected by the package.

"It is not a cop-out," said Mr. Amato in an interview published by La Stampa newspaper Saturday. "What would have been a cop-out would have been had these trials dragging on for ten years with no result."

"Our proposals take immediate effect — which is what both the people and the investigating magistrates wanted."

Angola president rejects truce, wants more arms

LUANDA (R) — Angola's embattled President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos has rejected a U.N. truce call and appealed for an arms embargo to be lifted so he can fight a renewed outbreak of his country's vicious civil war.

But Mr. Dos Santos, in an interview with Reuters Friday, also said he backs U.N. peace efforts and would consider allowing U.N. peacekeepers to try to restore order in the southern African country.

"The most important thing is that there should be an agreement between the two sides on a ceasefire and that there should be mechanisms to guarantee respect for the ceasefire," he said.

"Maybe we can discuss with the United Nations how they can send a peacekeeping force to Angola and what kind of mandate this force should have," he added.

Peace talks between the government and Jonas Savimbi's UNITA rebel movement collapsed last week when UNITA failed to send a delegation to a second round of U.N.-sponsored negotiations in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa.

Mr. Dos Santos said he was still committed to a negotiated settlement and would consider giving

Mr. Savimbi a government post as part of an eventual peace settlement.

But he rejected a proposal by the United Nations special representative to Angola, Margaret Anstee, that both sides should declare an immediate truce.

"How can we accept that UNITA will react favourably to this proposal of a truce when it didn't even bother to go to Addis Ababa?" he said.

"It doesn't seem to us that this is a very apt proposal or that it is realistic at the moment."

Mr. Dos Santos appealed for an international arms embargo on the government and UNITA, written into a collapsed 1991 peace agreement, to be scrapped.

"We think that this clause must be abolished because we have now a legitimate government elected by our people," he said.

But he said the embargo should remain in effect against UNITA and appealed for other forms of international pressure, including freezing UNITA assets and closing its offices abroad.

The president repeated charges that South African private interests were continuing to supply UNITA by air with the complexity of the government in Pretoria.

S. Korea frees thousands in sweeping amnesty

SEOUL (R) — President Kim Young-Sam, anxious to end South Korea's history of political repression, granted amnesty Saturday to more than 40,000 dissidents or prisoners.

"(The amnesty) is intended to lift completely the fog that has perpetually obscured our society over the past three decades," said Mr. Kim, who took office last week to become the first head of state since 1961 with no military background.

"It is intended to close a dark chapter of Korean history so that the country, no longer stuck in the past, will be able to move forward to create a new Korea," he said after a special cabinet meeting approved the amnesty.

More than 2,100 prisoners were released from jail Saturday, while more than 30,000 others were freed from restrictions on their civil liberties, such as the right to vote or to practise their profession.

The remainder of those benefiting from the nation's most sweeping amnesty have had their jail terms reduced.

Among those freed is South Korea's best-known political detainee, Moo Ik-Hwan, a Presbyterian minister jailed for seven years in 1989 for visiting Communist North Korea without government permission.

"Today's amnesty is not a customary measure to celebrate the

birth of a new administration but is meant as an appeal to let us all start over to build a new Korea," he said.

Despite the breadth of the amnesty, dissident groups said it did not go far enough. Some said as many as 1,000 people arrested for violating draconian security laws remain behind bars.

"Although this amnesty is unprecedented in our history, some people were left out. I wish I could grant leniency to all... but I could not consider unconditional releases," Mr. Kim said.

One of the nation's leading anti-government coalitions, Minkhyop, estimates that 400 dissidents are still in jail.

"Kim Young-Sam's amnesty is merely decorative and has no real significance," a Minkhyop statement said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Kim ordered an investigation Saturday into reports that newly-appointed Health Minister Park Yang-Sil was guilty of performing illegal abortions and illicit land speculation.

It was the third time in a week that Mr. Kim, who has pledged to run a clean administration and rid the country of rampant corruption and elitism, has been embarrassed into investigating the past of key appointees to his team.

News reports said Dr. Park, a 68-year-old obstetrician, was booked by prosecutors for per-

forming illegal abortions in 1969 and last January. She did not appear in court on the charges.

In general, abortion in South Korea is illegal but the practice is widespread.

Dr. Park is also alleged to have illegally bought property worth millions of dollars under her own and her children's names.

"The president has ordered an investigation into the news reports. But reports saying she would be sacked are not true," a government official said. He said an announcement was likely Monday.

Newspapers said Dr. Park had been moved to an agricultural district outside Seoul in 1986 to avoid a ban on urban dwellers buying farmland unless they register in a rural area for at least six months. He returned to Seoul after four months.

The health minister admitted owning the properties in question but said no illegal activities were involved. "I made no profit at all on the transaction," Yoonhap domestic news agency quoted her as saying.

She said her property assets were worth about six billion won (\$7.5 million) and that she had debts of about 2.5 billion won (\$3.15 million).

Dr. Park told Yoonhap she would not resign unless asked by President Kim.

but it hurts to think of those still inside," said Rev. Moon after being greeted joyfully by supporters who waited for hours outside the gates of a jail in the town of Andong in southeastern Kyongsangbuk-Do province.

"I will continue to fight for democracy and unification of South and North Korea," he said after emerging in traditional Korean costume to be deluged with flowers from friends.

Rev. Moon's remaining four-year sentence was cut in half in a Christmas 1992 amnesty authorised by ex-President Roh Tae-Woo, which also freed student Im Su-Kyong, known as the "flower of unification."

In 24, was also jailed for visiting Pyongyang, an action which contravened strict internal security laws.

Severo students jailed in 1991 for assaulting former Prime Minister Chung Won-Shik, coating him with eggs and flour and dragging him around a Seoul college campus, were also released.

President Kim, himself a former dissident and long-term opposition leader, has pledged to allow democracy to take root during his single five-year term after decades of military-backed governments.